Jan Fries

A manual of rune magick

Helrunar

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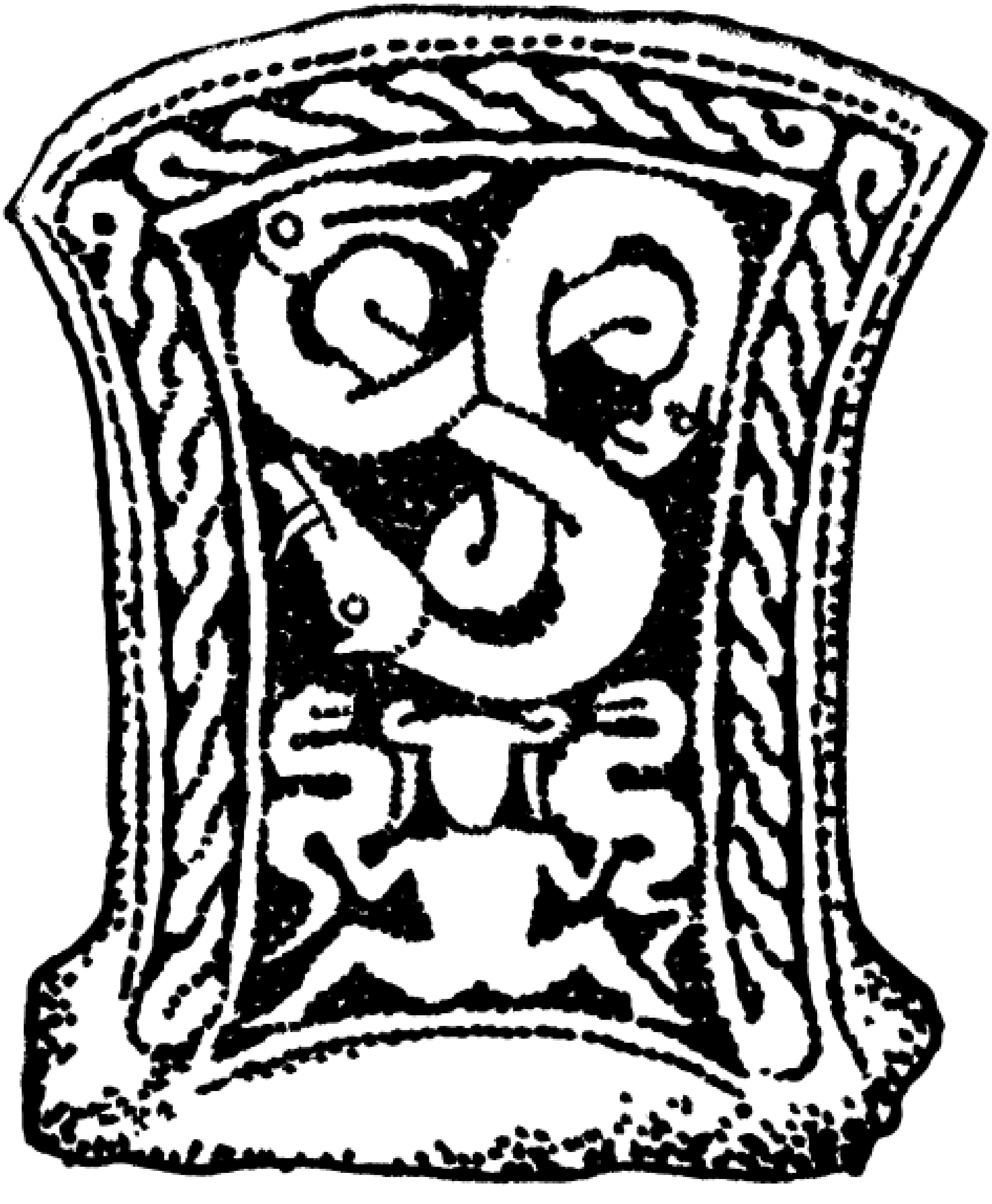
A Manual of Rune Magick

by Jan Fries

(Author of *Visual Magick*)

Mandrake
of Oxford



Stone from Smiss, Gotland

HELRUNAR

A MANUAL OF RUNE MAGICK

JAN FRIES

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Previous Books by the author:
Visual Magick: A Manual of Freestyle Shamanism (Mandrake of Oxford 1991)
forthcoming *Techniques of Obsession* (Mandrake of Oxford)

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To Joe C. of NAPZ, who back in '82ev, asked whether I could compile some of my experiences in rune magick in a little book.
To KG who responding kindly to the resulting thirty page manuscript made me dearly wish to improve it.
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And finally to all of you who dare to go beyond book reading into the wild and wonderful world of practice, enthusiasm and personal experience: Thank you.

A CIP record card is available for this book from the British Library

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Note on transliteration

In order to compose this manuscript the typsetters have had to use several different rune fonts, mainly Elvish, Clinton, Runes of Power and Trondheim. Even so some of the more unusual variations were added by hand.
The Old English character thorn (ᚦ) has been transliterated throughout as 'th'.
The Old English character '∂' looks like a 'd' but is actually pronouched 'eth'

Preface by Nema

The magical revival, begun around the opening of the twentieth century by various Victorian-era occultists, is alive and well near the end of the century. In turbulent times, humans tend to seek stability and comfort from truths and realities that transcend the turbulence. When familiar institutions fail, we look to the strange and mysterious. An increasing number of people are choosing to assume responsibility for their own spiritual growth through the twin ways of Mysticism and Magick.

In this last decade of the century, there are occult bookshops in any medium-sized city in the 'western' world; individuals and groups are publishing a growing number of occult magazines; there is an international community of occultists, with subgroups of wiccans neopagans, shamans, druids, ceremonial magicians, thelemites, Maat magicians, rune-workers, chaos magicians and others. There are psychick youth, new agers, tantrics, and various self-realization groups that also publish copiously.

Much of the available information is either micro-focused on a particular point of interest or a particular system or philosophy, or speaks in terms too broad and vague to be of practical use. Much of the material is either too complex or too simplistic, which isn't surprising, giving the range of levels of understanding among authors and audience.

In *Helrunar*, Jan Fries presents a complete Magical system based on the runes, written in plain language that beginners can understand. Experienced Magicians will find it of interest also, since it contains the author's practical field experiences and informed theory.

I find it both interesting and praiseworthy that *Helrunar* doesn't mention grades and degrees of initiation, even though the practices presented in it will provide numerous initiatory opportunities.

Jan and I are long-term correspondents who finally met in England in July 1990. We began with a link in the Maat current, a link which I came to value highly and to enjoy profoundly over the years. Jan writes about what he knows from experience, personal experiments, and happy survival. ('That which does not kill us makes us strong.')

His graphic genius illuminates - not merely illustrates - the text. He's travelled extensively to draw numerous petroglyphs from life; those who are familiar with astral imagery will recognize that he draws from life in that realm also. His scholarship is trustworthy, and provides a solid background on the probable history of the runes.

The best part of *Helrunar*, in my opinion, lies in the practices, in the definite actions and activities prescribed. The Sioux Medicine Chief, Black Elk, speaks about experiencing a mighty vision concerning the survival of his tribe. Rather than filtering his vision through words to communicate its import to the tribe, Black Elk taught the tribe a dance that he learned from the spirits in his vision. As they danced this sacred dance, the people of the tribe shared Black Elk's vision directly, without a mediator. So it is with *Helrunar*. If you work with the system Jan presents, persevering through obstruction and difficulties, you will be personally transformed. The term 'work' means exactly that: physical effort intelligently applied. Reading *Helrunar* won't transform you, but doing the practices will. Doing the practices means moving about physically, making (sometimes) loud sounds, and overcoming the embarrassment of acting like a fool in private.

For the reader who has been working with runes for a while, Helrunar offers a fresh point of view. I'm sure Jan would welcome your point of view as well. What he lacks in solemnity is more than made up for by an irreverent sense of humour and an artist's eye for the absurd. Magick changes with the needs of the time. Although there are a number of Orders, Covens, other groups and individuals who hold that traditions are to be kept unchanged, as a means of preserving them, still others extend the traditions from the past, to the present and on through to the future. The truth that underlies all valid systems of initiation is eternal and changeless. The manifestations of that Truth are changing constantly; each generation needs to interpret and speak the Truth in the language of the times.

Our times are seeing the 'global Village' predicted by Marshall McLuhan rapidly linking itself in electronic communications. To balance this burgeoning unity, ethnic/traditional diversity should be encouraged and cherished. The only guarantee of continuity in a particular system is its evolutionary response to - and anticipation of - world changes. *Helrunar* speaks to this situation, encouraging an attitude of fluidity in approach to the runes along with respect for their traditional power and meaning. In my opinion, Jan is one of the most profoundly competent initiates in print today. He fulfills his ethical obligation to the international community of initiates by making the fruits of his experiences available in *Helrunar* and other works. Magicians don't proselytize, coerce, or spoon feed. Here is the material; the rest is up to you.

Nema
Newark, Ohio USA

Introduction

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

Hello! The book you are about to enjoy is a manual. It is meant for practising magicians of various creeds and currents, for people who enjoy to experiment, to do exercises, to find their own unique interpretation of pagan nature religion. On the surface, the book deals with runes. As you may know already, the runes are an alphabetical system of writing which was popular in northern Europe before the Christian church inflicted the Roman alphabet on the population. Now the meaning of the rune signs went far beyond their use as a system of writing.

As with most ancient alphabets, the runes were considered a sacred system of cosmology, and for many centuries their use was restricted to members of the priesthood, who used them to write, to divine, to bind spells, to work magick, to construct sigils and talismans and to explore body and energy consciousness in various physical and mental exercises. To these priests, each of the rune signs connected with a very specific state of energy and consciousness.

The runes are not a single system but several. What we call the rune alphabets or the futhorc rows nowadays, are collections of sacred symbols which contain the mysteries of many pagan cultures. Some of those rune signs have seen magical use for some 30,000 years or so, which may give you an idea why I consider rune magick not so much as a Germanic or Nordic tradition but as a conglomeration of religious signs containing religious beliefs that began in the Neanderthal periods, were developed by our ancestors, the Cro-Magnon people, and put to magical use by many of the later cultures that made their way across Europe. These points will be dealt with in detail. I simply mention them here so you will get some idea on the scope of things you will encounter in these pages.

What does the word 'rune' mean?

Old English: 'runian' = to whisper.
'leodrunan' – song-runes
Old High German: 'rune' = secret, mystery.
Modern German: 'zu raunen' = to hiss or whisper secrets.
Old Irish: 'run' = secret.
Old Norse: 'runar' = mysteries.
Old Scaldic Icelandic: 'runi' = friend, companion, adviser.
'runnr' = woodland.
Middle Welsh: 'rhin' = magic charm.
Finnish: 'runo' = song, chant, incantation.

No doubt you know that runes can be used for divination, much like the tarot or the Chinese I-Ching. There are plenty of books on this theme, where you can teach yourself how to cast the runes and what they are supposed to mean. The more costly ones may even include a full set of runes, all tastefully done on little bits of plastic, so the result hungry will not have to crawl through trees and bogs looking for wood, but can enjoy the pleasure of instant divination in the comfort of a well-heated living room. Well, you will not find this sort thing in these pages. Though I do give the traditional meaning of the runes, as quoted from the various rune poems, in the last part of this volume, the emphasis is on practice. This means that I do expect you to enjoy nature contacts (such as trees and bogs), and if you don't, you should better give this book to someone who is better suited to the job than you are.

This is a book of discovery. You are invited to think and experiment for yourself, to do independent research, to explore the rune signs from within and to arrive at your own unique interpretation of the symbols. How can you do this? Let's look at the structure of the whole. The book is divided into three parts. These three sections are named after the Norns - Urda, Werdandi and Skulda, who refer to the flow of development (past, present, future) and to the three levels of the world tree: roots, stem, branches.

In the **Urda** part you will find plenty of material on the history and ethnology of rune magick and European nature religion. This is the soil out of which the system developed. The Urda part also includes chapters on nature experience, cosmology, Qabalah, shamanic practices and the baleful influence on nature religion of National Socialism.

The **Werdandi** part is concerned with practice. The runes are much more than ideas and theory. Each of the rune signs can be imitated by the body, i.e. the symbol form can be assumed in posture, ritual gesture, dance and hand sign. Using certain methods of breathing, chanting and imagination, the power of each rune can be conveyed through body, which leads to highly interesting experiences. Rune energy can be directly experienced this way and used to improve health and energy levels, it can also be used for various magical purposes and for group rituals. Other methods given in the Werdandi section detail divination practices, sigil making and the use of energy for ritual and shamanism.

The last part, **Skulda**, gives the material for the working. Here you will find the genuine old rune poems and various interpretations of the signs and words, plus a few comments I could not resist making. Apart from this dictionary, you will find a detailed description of trance practice and astral projection. These methods will help you to discover your own vision of the runes, i.e. the secret meaning they have to your deep mind. It is this knowledge, which comes from direct experience, that makes your rune magick valid and vital. Using these materials, you are free to develop your own system of rune magick. Let us consider rune magick a field of creative development. This may not look quite as impressive as all those books which promise to reveal 'the genuine old secrets of the holy tradition.' But then I do not believe in any tradition except 'find out for yourself!' This book does not offer the usual 'look up the answer' material so typical of trashy esoteric publications. It does offer methods for the direct experience of each rune. It may take time and effort to master these methods, but then this may help to evolve an understanding of the runes which is specifically suited to your nature, meaning that you have your own genuine experience of each sign and are free to put it to use as suits your will and being.

Instead of asking you to believe in my interpretations, I ask you to examine them critically. I do not want you to adhere to my dogma (which I may or may not believe as suits the occasion) but to explore with an open mind in the joy of self discovery. What works for me need not be suitable for you, do not trust me but find out for yourself.

In these pages you will find some curious metaphors to describe specific aspects of the self. I do not use them quite the way they are applied in the various schools of psychology, and so perhaps I should clear them up straight away. In exploring awareness, we encounter a division of consciousness, which is often classified as the 'conscious' and 'unconscious' self. In this book I will use the term 'conscious self' to describe those aspects of awareness which you experience consciously at any given time. Right now you are conscious of these words for example, and of the ideas, visions, feelings, inner comments which they trigger. You are probably not conscious of your hormone production, or the rhythms of your heart and lungs, or of the things which happened at work the other day. The conscious self is usually a very small field of awareness, which is conveniently considered as an identity, personality, or ego and which consists of various habits, skills, names, labels, achievements, neurotic strains and a deep-rooted belief in its own 'reality'. The 'unconscious self' is not unconscious, it is simply closed to our limited conscious self. The unconscious self, which is often referred to as the deep mind in these pages, does hundreds of fantastic things for us all of the time, and usually we do not even notice or appreciate them. It perceives much more than we consciously do, stores all memories, keeps our bodies healthy and in function, provides dreams and inspiration, keeps our habits automatic, works our thought processes, allows us to learn and forget, keeps our identity continuous and does a myriad of things for us which would utterly overwhelm the conscious self. When speaking in a general context I like to use the metaphor of the deep mind while in certain chapters the metaphor of the 'gods' and 'spirits' seems more efficient. If we consider the 'parts' of the deep mind as distinct entities, such as 'gods', 'angels', 'spirits', 'ghosts', etc., we may find it easier to contact them and establish communication. Now

I do not claim that these beings actually exist. If we want to make contact, which is the essence of Helruning we will find that these models and beliefs are useful. In one sense, the model is true, and the experience real. In another sense, the model is not the reality but a representation of it. We need not believe that any model is real, it is enough to use it to achieve specific effects. What I write here is a book of lies and dead names. You will make use of these dead names, fill them with your experience, and make a system come alive which is specifically you. For this purpose, you should feel free to use any model which produces results.

There are deeper levels to this book, which deal, not so much with the runes but with the art and practice of achieving contact, communication and cooperation with the deep mind. What I write here makes sense to the deep mind, which probably understands much better than you do. Perhaps I ought to speak directly to your deep mind, whether you call it your 'inner self', 'gods', 'spirits', 'holy guardian angel' or 'Flygia', and ask the whole of you to make the practices of this book a journey or self-discovery.

Perhaps you should also speak to your deep mind. More so, you ought to watch out for its answers. To make the most out of this book, you could perhaps establish the following habit. At the end of each chapter close your eyes for a moment and turn your attention inwards. Ask your deep mind if it has any comments, hints or improvements upon what your have just read. This will combine the words of these pages with the helpful advice of a genuine and living teacher, whom you may discover within yourself.

Another virtue which may be useful is patience. Some of the practices of this book will require repeated experiment before they begin to work. This means work, often hard work. Sometimes it will be easy and you will get good results, but often it will be difficult and you will need to perservere. Part of this book will be directed at your ego, your identity and at the nature of the reality you believe in. Often the ego with its clear beliefs and firm limitations is the greatest obstacle in the evolution of the whole self.

You will change yourself,.and this essentially is what the magick is all about. Your deep mind will help you in this, the 'Great Work'. It has evolved ego in the first place and knows that personality is fluid and can be changed. It is in an excellent position to change you from within and to make you the healthy, life embracing person your whole self wills you to be.

Perhaps you're asking yourself what background this book developed out of. Though I practise and write about nature religion, I do not belong to any of the schools of wicca. This book stems from experience of the ancient ones, but also the modern current of Thelemic magick and its earthing in the Maatian network. These magical systems are all fairly abstract, and their mythology, which is strongly Egyptian/Hebrew/Sumerian, comes from climes and landscapes which are alien to central Europe. To effect a solid earthing of Thelemic and Maatian consciousness I found it useful to adapt these energy currents to local conditions, to the mountains and forests, to the gods of nature, the rhythm of the seasons, the spirits of the land. In a way, 'helrunar' is a way of giving thanks to the spirits of the wild wood, to the natural heritage of pagan Europe. In another sense, *Helrunar* offers more than just another field of magical tradition.

If you go beyond the specific details of any magical tradition, you will notice that, though the beliefs, symbols and contents differ, the functions and structures of magick are international and timeless, and possibly, built into the structure of our brains. I offer this book by the same mouth to you, to me, to us, to all of us. With love and laughter, let us develop something new.

Now, apart from asking you to plunge into practice and fresh experience, I also ask you to get yourself two books. One of them is quite brief and very amusing: *Germania* by Tacitus, the famous Roman historian. The other volume is the *Edda* which is a collection of poems, songs and prose legends dealing with the various Nordic deities and beliefs. The prose parts of the Edda go back to a handbook for Skalds (Nordic bards), composed and collected by Snorri Sturluson around 1200 in Iceland, while the poems and songs are several centuries older and can be traced to various Scandinavian and Middle European sources. I would not claim that the Scandinavian or Icelandic representation is an adequate description of the older Middle European beliefs. However, so much material was violently destroyed by the church, that these few manuscripts, hidden in Iceland at the northern rim of the world, are the only coherent descriptions of Germanic religion which have come to us. I will refer to these titles very frequently, so get yourself good translations and start to study them. Other works of interest can be looked up in the bibliography.

Love is the Law, Love under Will.
Jan Fries
Frankfurt 1993

URDA

1

Sources of the Rune Signs

For more than 100,000 years human beings have practised magical/religious customs. The early Neanderthal culture (from 120,000BC onwards) had already developed an understanding of the world far beyond the simple behaviour patterns that allow a primate group to function and survive. The brain of these people had an average capacity of 1450cc and easily surpassed their ancestors (some Neanderthal skulls have contained upto 1700cc of brain matter which is more than the skull capacity of most modern humans). Neanderthal behaviour contained some basic structures of human self expression, namely:

- Highly developed tools made of stone, bone, wood, horn, leather, rope.
- Articles of clothing, blankets and tents sewn with fine bone needles.
- Division of work within the group. This implies that elderly and infirm people held a useful function in domestic life, while the younger members of the tribe went out to hunt.
- The first ornaments and artistic designs known to us. Neanderthal aesthetics make much use of the basic geometry of point, line and space. Such patterns were carved into tools (improving the grip) but also worked into huge stones, probably serving a religious function.
- Religious practices. In the Drachenloch cave in the Alps an elaborate 'altar' was discovered, consisting of stone structures housing a series of cave bear skulls.
- Funeral customs. Dead individuals were not abandoned as would happen in a normal primate herd, but were elaborately buried. Usually the corpse was laid into a grave filled with red ochre (a colour suggesting the red of birth and blood), frequently with a number of utensils, such as stone tools and magical objects; mountain ibex horns

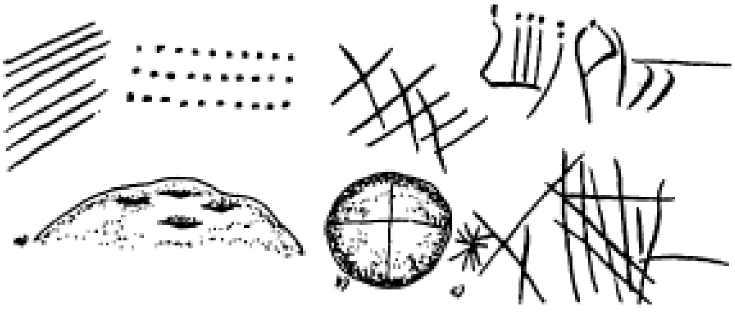
struck into the ground around the corpse, or mammoth ivory laid to the sides were often included. In some groups only the skulls were buried. We find whole groups of skulls, all bedded in red ochre, facing west (sunset, hence death). Pollen samples show that some burial sites had been decorated with huge quantities of flowers and healing plants, not to mention mild drugs such as cannabis and a certain mushroom growing on trees. In some periods ritual cannibalism was highly fashionable.

All of this indicates that our earliest ancestors had a spiritual conception of themselves, a notion of individuality and a conceivable 'after death' existence which might explain the gifts and objects buried with the dead.

The basic signs used by the Neanderthal people were points, lines and spaces. The points were usually deeply engraved into stones, so that several generations of scientists arrived at the suspicion that the many hollows found on such stones had originally held small offerings, be it blossoms, fluids or earth colours. Stones containing such small hollows are still called 'witche's bowls' in northern Germany and believed to attract good luck. The hollows were frequently connected, thus the point (being) becomes line (motion, change, communication). There have been attempts to relate such patterns to the constellations, but so far no conclusive evidence has been found. Out of the lines and points space arises as a third quality. This 'space' idea is visible in the whole of the 'network', but also in the criss-cross patterns found on cave walls or on bone tools.

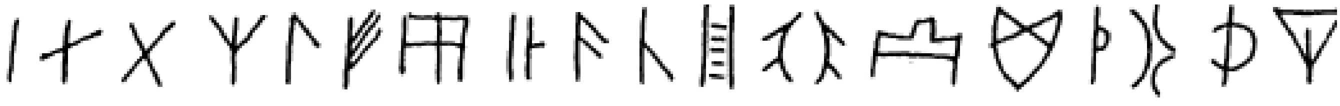
Maybe there is a basic human need to improve, transform and interpret reality through the creative arrangement of objects, tools, living space (territory), signs, symbols, ornaments etc. The desire for artistic expression appears together with the concept of individual existence and the development of abstract thought: a process which changed a loosely-knit ape herd into a functional human society composed of individual persons.

While the Neanderthal people seem to have been quite content with their simple cosmology, the Cro-Magnon people, our direct ancestors, developed a much more complicated vision of the world. Sources of Cro-Magnon culture go back to c.50,000BC. They had a fantastic range of artifacts, paintings, statuettes, burial customs and a spectrum of abstract symbols that will keep science confused for centuries. By 30,000BC they had scattered hundreds of abstract symbols over the walls of ritual caves. It should be noted that the stone age people lived near but rarely in the caves. The term cave-man is quite misleading. Most of the year, the tribes followed the beasts in order to avoid starvation, and settled in hide tents. The lack of rubbish in the caves indicates that they were usually visited for ritual purposes only. Cro-Magnon people developed both aspects of art at once: the naturalistic and the abstract.



(a) shows a typical stone with four small hollows. (b) is a flat, rounded stone carved with a simple cross from Hungary: the simplest possible description of the universe. (c) shows part of a wild and confusing design in a cult cave from the Île de France. Question: how many basic rune symbols are suggested in this sort of artwork?

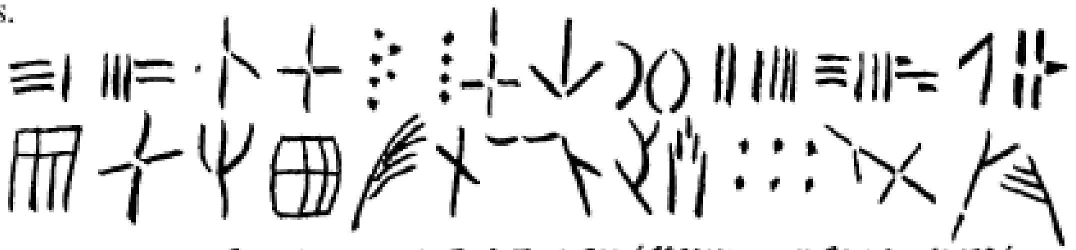
A considerable number of paleolithic symbols show similarities to rune signs. Glyphs such as the following can be found in numerous periods and next to all dawn age cultures.



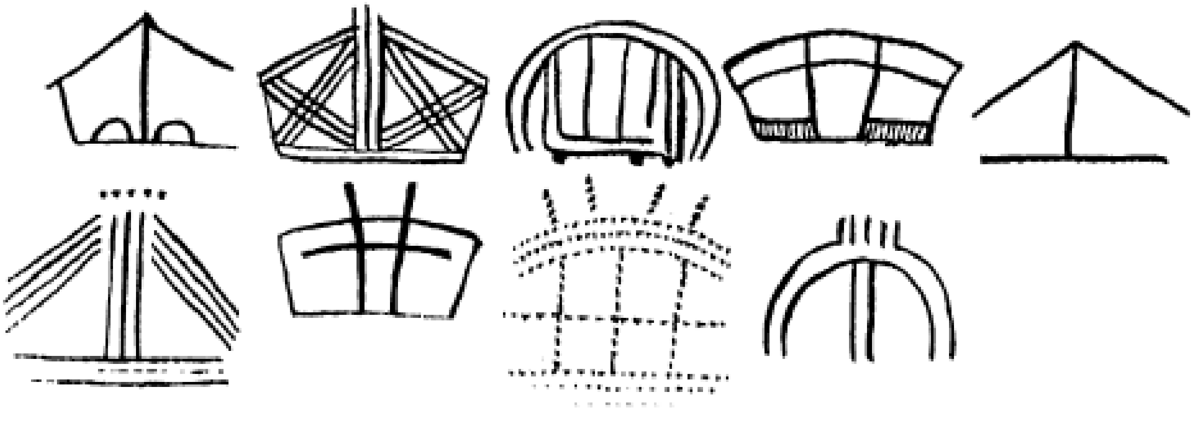
This would not necessarily make them the direct historical ancestors of the northern rune systems. Perhaps we should view them as root symbols of humanity; signs that express certain basic structures of consciousness and experience, which have been discovered and applied during all periods of human development.

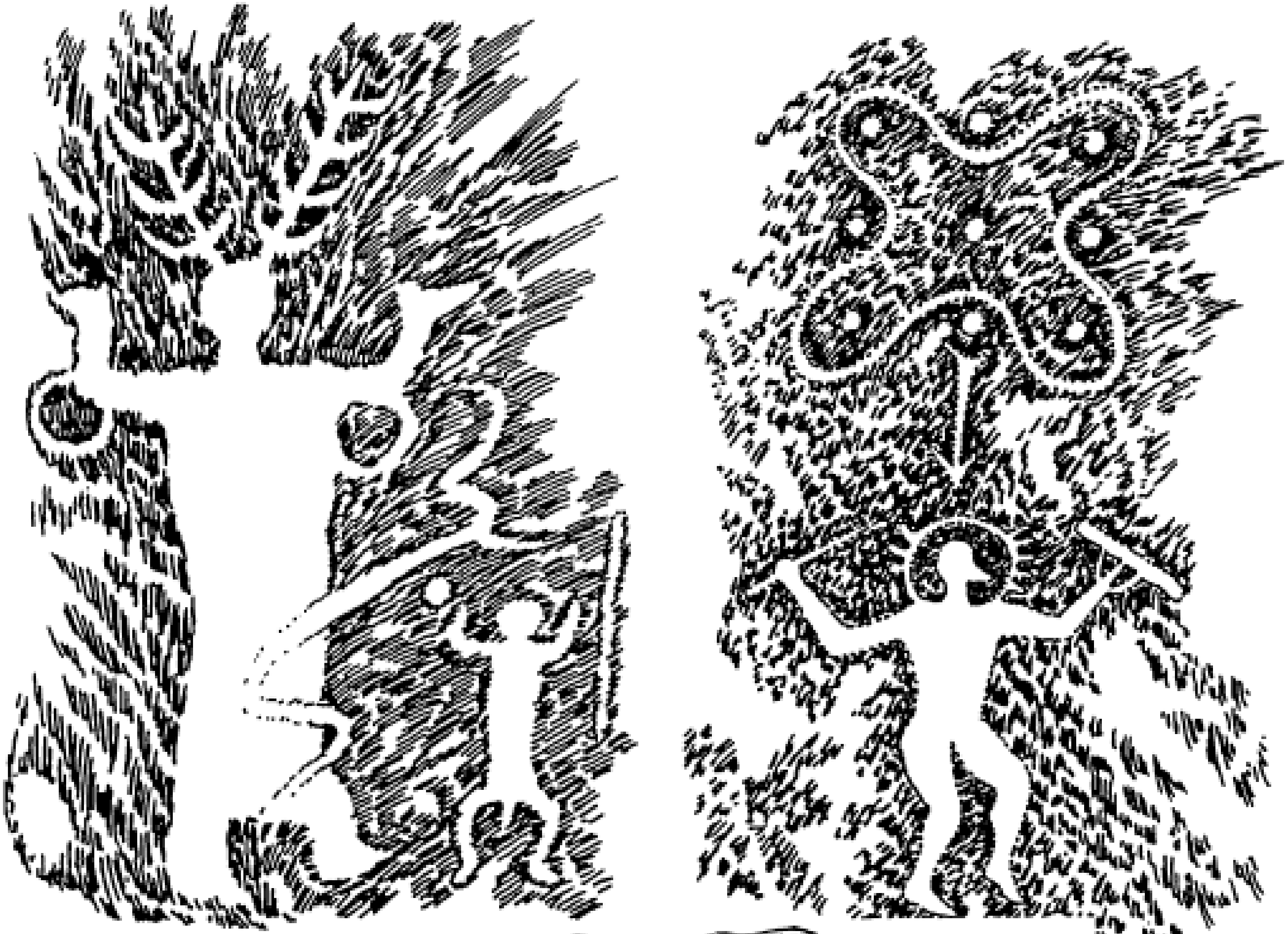
Of course we cannot be sure what these signs were supposed to mean. There are, however, ways of finding out what such signs may mean to us. The strength of such sigils lies in their potential of self revelation; i.e. in their ability to inspire the observer to his or her own realization of the forces implied by the structure. If you study examples of stone age art you will find that the artists of that period were quite capable of rendering very naturalistic pictures. Where abstractions were employed this was done by choice, not by inability. The meaning of abstractions lies in their function: they do not define but suggest a meaning suited to the observer. An abstract sign is not limited to a single meaning, but reveals a whole spectrum of similar ideas sharing a common form. The sign works to trigger the proper flow of imagination in the seer. Accordingly, a sign may have many interpretations on many levels of insight: revelations that are by no means dry theory but living experience.

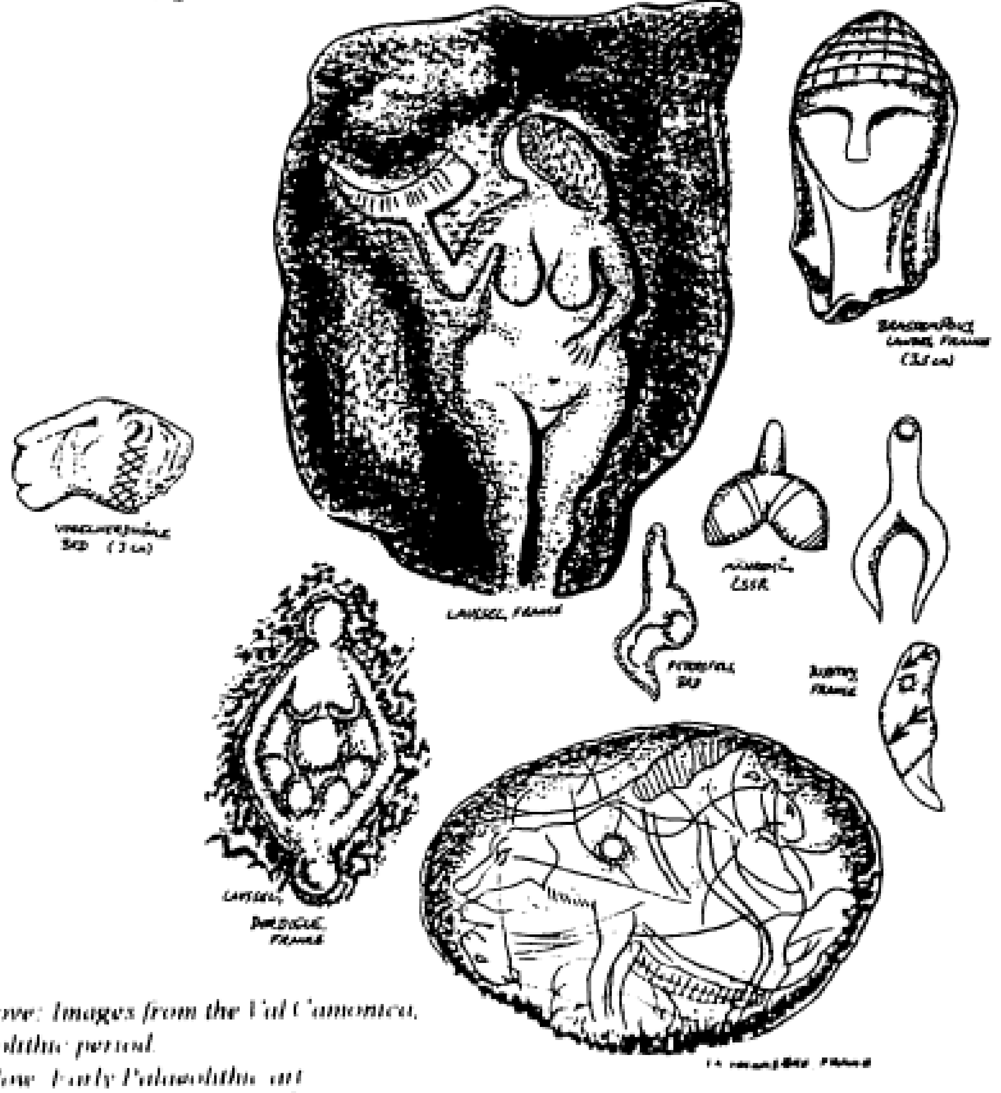
In their use of 'source signs', the artist/magicians of the dawn ages employed a language perfectly suited to communicate across the aeons. This language is rooted in all of us. These signs were not created but received. The language of symbols is far older than the word bound languages of the intellect: form, colour, structure, sound etc., touch levels of sub-conscious activity that cannot be reached by word alone. It is through symbols that we may speak to the deep, and using symbols the deep may speak to us.



CRO-MAGNON PERIOD: ABSTRACT SYMBOLS FROM THE LASCAUX CAVE, 20.000 – 10.000 b.c.






BRASSEMPOUY, LANDES, FRANCE (3.5 cm)
VOGELHERDHÖHLE BRD (3 cm)
LAUSSEL, FRANCE
USSR
PETERSFELS, BRD
ISTURITZ, FRANCE
LAUSSEL, DORDOGNE, FRANCE
FRANCE

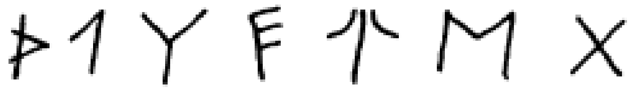
Above: Images from the Val Camonica, Neolithic period.
Below: Early Palaeolithic art

2

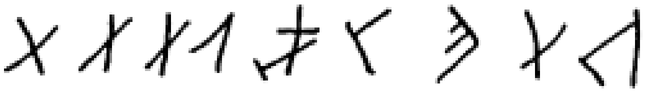
Where did the Runes come from?

Rune type symbols can be found in most periods of history in almost any country. A few paleolithic examples have been given, here are some more.

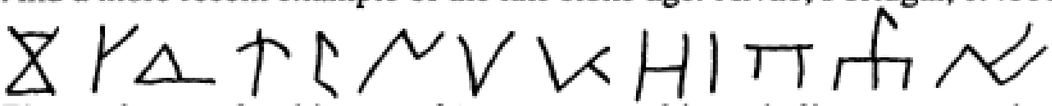
Mas D'Azil:



A bone from Rochbertier cave:



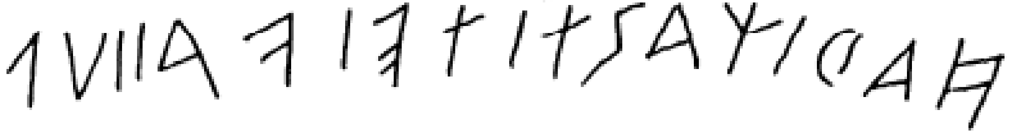
And a more recent example of the late stone age: Alvão, Portugal, c.4000 BC:



The preference for this sort of 'easy to scratch' symbolism seems to be deeply ingrained in human consciousness. There is a considerable difference between an ideogram [an idea-picture] and an alphabetical letter, which expresses an abstract sound value. All early systems of writing began with ideograms and some, such as the Chinese, retain this ancient method.

The runes are both alphabetical script and ideograms—i.e. the various letters are also pictures. This a custom which may be found in some of the elder alphabets (such as Phoenician or Hebrew) but not in Roman script. All systems of writing began as a sacred and secret art which was usually restricted to members of the priesthood. Likewise, to the common people a written word was something magical, a device that contains an idea which cannot be deduced from the shape of the signs.

Very few samples of the early stages of rune writing have survived. Those that have, as far as they can be deciphered, seem to deal with religious dedications. The oldest known rune texts come from the second century. There also exist a few proto-rune inscriptions which look like a mixture of the Alpine alphabets with the common twenty-four rune Futhorc, such as this inscription from 200BC:



The text comes from a helmet found in Negau (Steiermark). It reads from right to left 'Harigasti Teiwa.' 'Teiwa/z' is one of the oldest Germanic deities and 'Harigast' (guest of the army) is one of the names of Wodan. The right to left direction is typical for early rune texts, though rather unusual for European alphabets. That rune type symbols have been in use for millennia is beyond question. Examples will be found in part III of this book, where each rune letter is shown complete with similar shapes from earlier periods. Probably these earlier shapes were ideograms, not letters. Just where did the use of the rune alphabet come from? This question has upset whole generations of scholars. There exist a number of more or less reasonable explanations which vary in accordance to the fashion of their time. I will try to give a short description of the more colourful theories, not to provide answers but to elaborate on the riddle. Create your own working theory if you feel like it and do not worry too much over the 'facts' - in a decade or two they will have changed, like everything we believe to know.

1. 'The Futhorc developed out of Roman Script.'

This is a classical theory which was fashionable during the last century. At that time nobody credited the German/Celtic people with any sort of culture, hence the stubborn belief that all civilized custom must have been imported. It was firmly believed that 'the light came from the east', meaning that the north Europeans were a herd of crude savages, barely domesticated by the refining influence of the Roman empire. Roman script and rune letters show a degree of similarity, such as ᚠ = F, ᚢ = U, ᚺ = H, ᚱ = R etc., which settled the.matter for several decades. Then the flaws in the theory began to be noticed. Roman writing goes left to right while early rune texts move in the opposite direction. The order of the Roman alphabet is quite different, and there are several rune letters that have no parallels in Roman script. Also, the earliest rune writers were probably priests, and consequently on rather hostile terms with the Roman conquerors who permitted pagan religion but prohibited its priesthood. It seems unlikely that they would have accepted a sacred system of writing from the occupation force.

Some authors continue to cling to a curious adventure story. They claim that the Cimmerian and Teutonic people learned the alphabet from the Romans or the Alpine tribes before getting massacred, and that the few survivors carried the new knowledge north on their hasty flight. On the whole, the 'Roman origin' theory is rarely voiced nowadays.

2. 'The Futhorc developed out of the Greek alphabet.'

This theory has several advantages. For one thing the Greek people did not appear to conquer but to trade, which makes cultural exchange much easier. Greek sailors had a trading colony at Massilia (Marseille) from where they operated a vast network of continental trade routes. They were on friendly terms with the Celts, who learned the art of coin making from them around 400BC, each tribe speedily developing its own distinct symbolism. Greek sailors travelled to the north sea and to Cornwall centuries before Rome acquired her characteristic megalomania. It has even been suspected that Homer's description of the Phaeacian islands parallels Plato's description of Atlantis (there is an amazing number of similarities well worth the research) while the Kimbrians described by Homer (who lived in perpetual darkness in the far north of the world-ocean) are probably the Cimmerians of history. Other authors mention the meeting of Gothian tribes with Greek traders at the Caspian sea (south Russia) around 600BC. There are some curious parallels in the mythology of the Celtic tribes and certain Greek cultures, which led Robert Graves to the assumption that the Celts did not originate in southern Germany but in Greece, and that their entire mythology can be explained in terms of Greek symbolism. We need not accept his historic fantasies to realize that the proto-Celtic tribes (Indo-Europeans) split up at some point of their migration, one branch becoming the Celtic culture at the springs of the Danube, another moving south to the Greek islands.

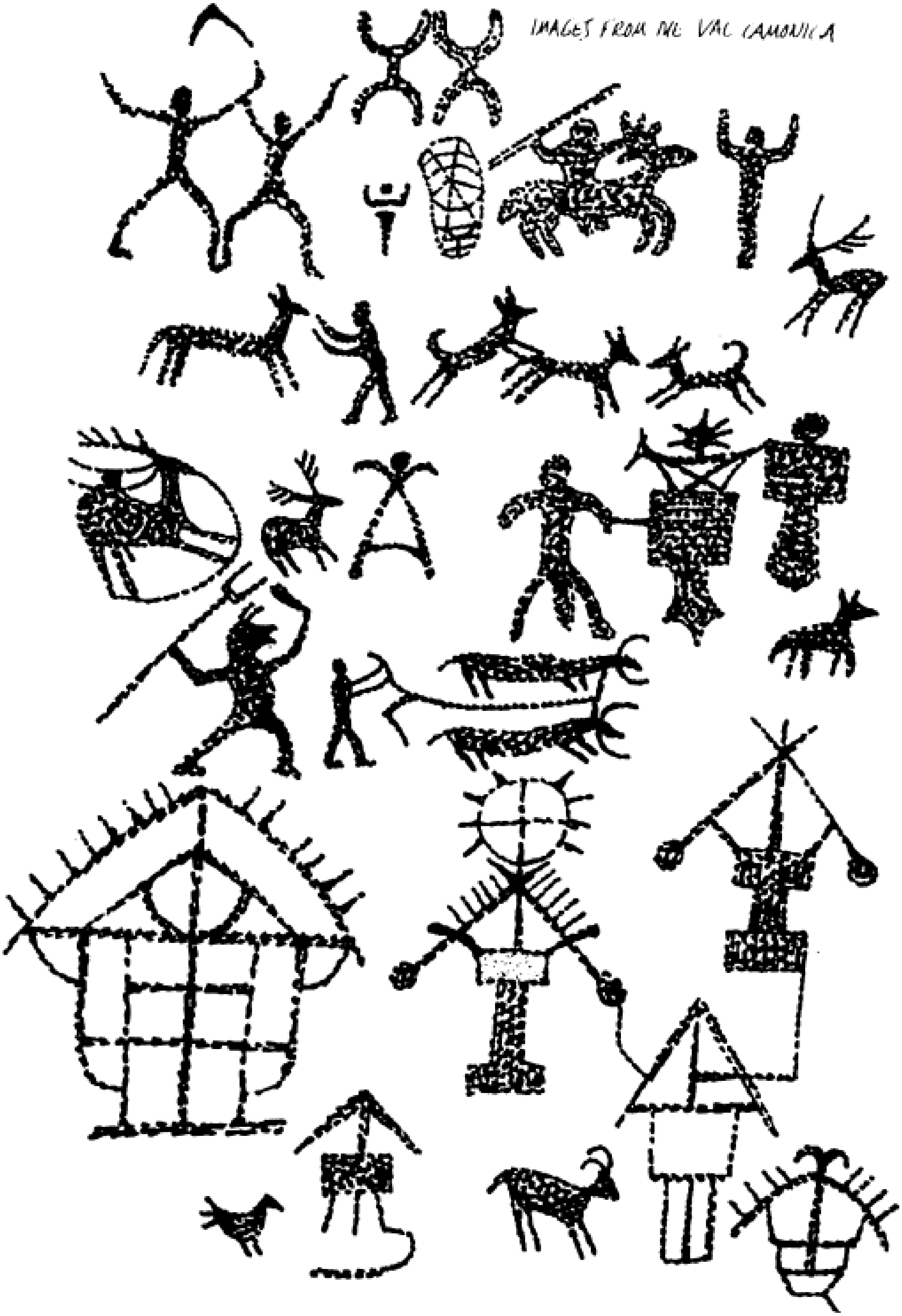
As to the origin of the Futhorc out of the Greek alphabet, there is, alas, no proof whatsoever. There are similarities, just as there are with Latin, but this is hardly remarkable when we remember that the Romans borrowed much of their script from the Greek and the Etruscans.

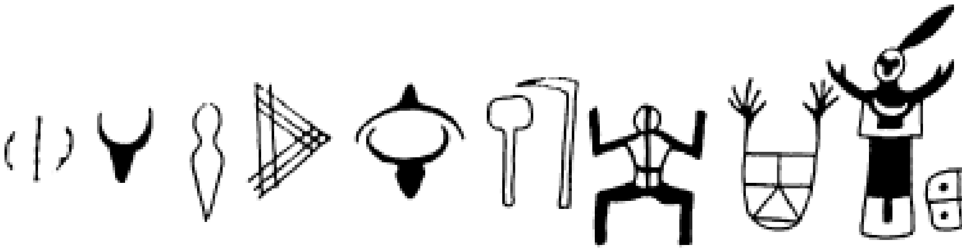
3. 'The Futhorc developed out of the Etruscan/north Italian script.'

This theory is rather popular nowadays. The Etruscans were a mysterious culture that came (presumably) from the near east and settled in northern Italy where it blended with the local population. It seems likely that the Etruscans came, just as the legends claim, from Troy. Their culture seems to appear around 700BC and speedily absorbed the cultural influence of the tribes that had settled in the southern Alps for some 6,000 years. The Etruscan alphabet, according to classical authors, was developed out of the Greek and its original Phoenician source. In its new homeland it got mixed up with the signs and symbols of the the Alpine tribes, producing several distinct north-Italian alphabets some of which come very close to Futhorc letters. The ᚢ rune for instance would look like V in Latin and Etruscan, but like ᐱ or ⋀ in Alpine script. ᚻ , ᚺ looks like H in Greek and Latin, like ⊟ , ⊟ in Etruscan and like ⧄ in Alpine letters. ᛚ, as a rune, is identical with the Alpine ᛚ but differs from the Greek, Roman and Etruscan √ ⱴ L . These are some similarities, nevertheless they do not explain everything.

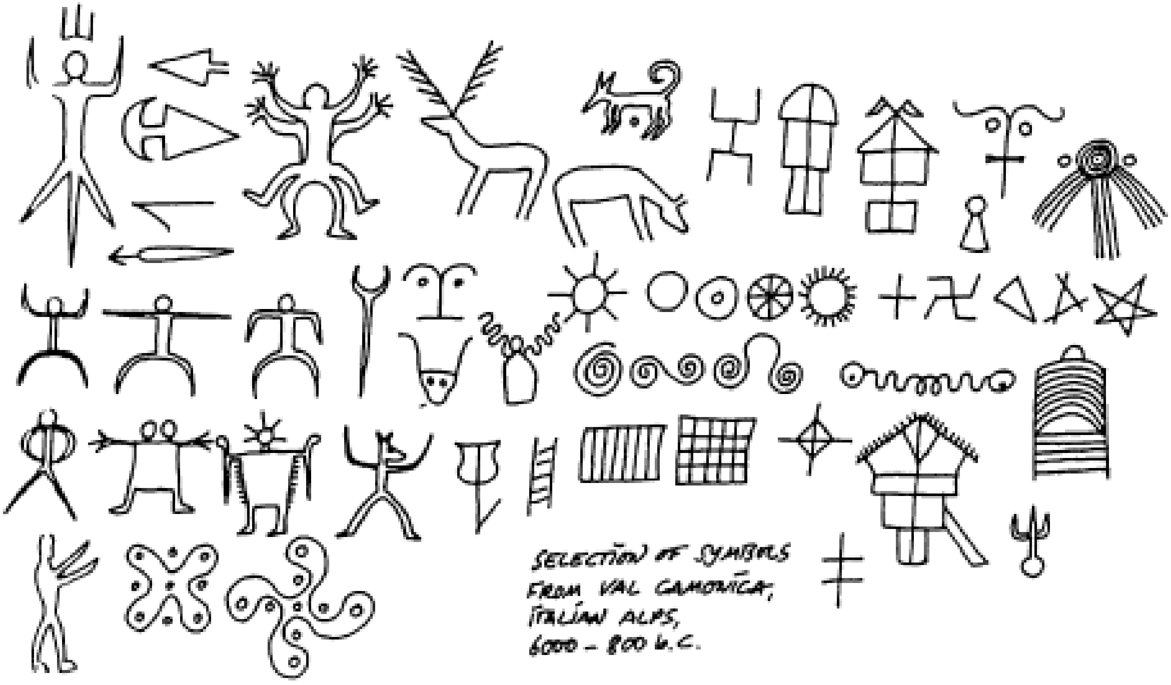
It has long been thought that the Etruscans brought culture to their new country. This cultural chauvinism has long blinded scholars to the wealth of symbology left by the Alpine tribes. All over the Alps, but especially in their southern ranges, rock pictures have been found ranging from the nomadic periods when the Ice Age ceased (around 6000BC) over the development of agriculture, the taming of beasts to the confrontation with the Etruscans. In the famous Val Camonica [valley of the Camoni] in northern Italy, more than 30,000 rock engravings have been found. Similar numbers of carvings are known from Monte Bego and many other places. These pictures, symbols and ideograms cover the entire history of Alpine life up to the Roman

IMAGES FROM THE VAL CAMONICA

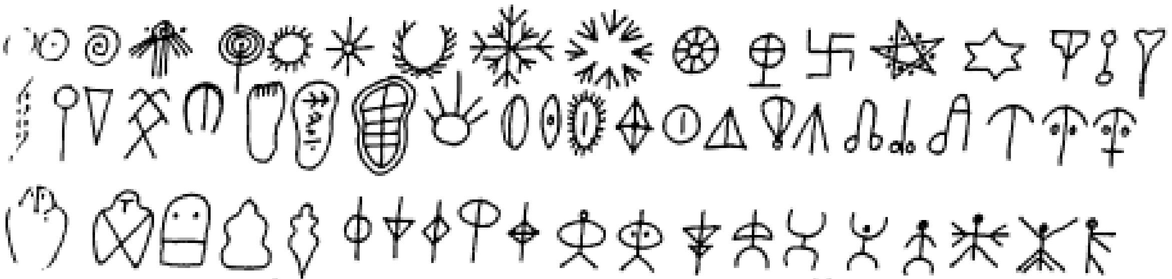




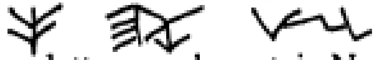
FROM MONTE BEGO,
FRENCH ALPS,
3000 - 1000 b.c.



SELECTION OF SYMBOLS
FROM VAL CAMONICA,
ITALIAN ALPS,
6000 - 800 b.C.



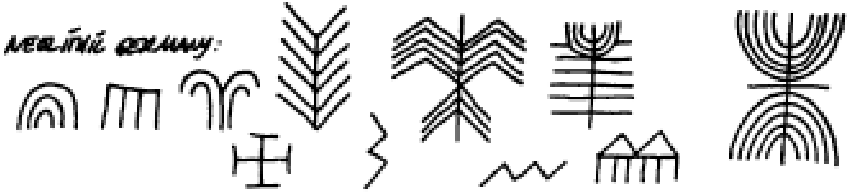
DIVERSE
LOCATIONS IN
THE SOUTHERN ALPS.

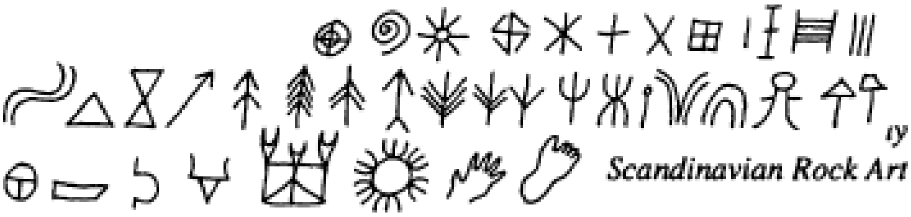
occupation under Caesar Augustus when the local culture came to a swift and brutal end. Among these symbols are several rune-like forms which science considers 'badly written Etruscan in a local dialect,' meaning that they cannot read them. Here is an example I saw at Val Camonica: 
The similarity of such signs with rune letters made certain Nazi scientists declare that the Camoni people were really 'migrated south Germans' in spite of the fact that they appear several millennia before the Germans did.

Where the Camoni and their fellow tribes originally came from is unknown. They traded with the people north and south of the Alps but on the whole they stayed in their secluded valley. Some examples of Alpine rock engravings are shown on pages 22-3. I give them not so much as traces for the rune signs but for the fun of it.

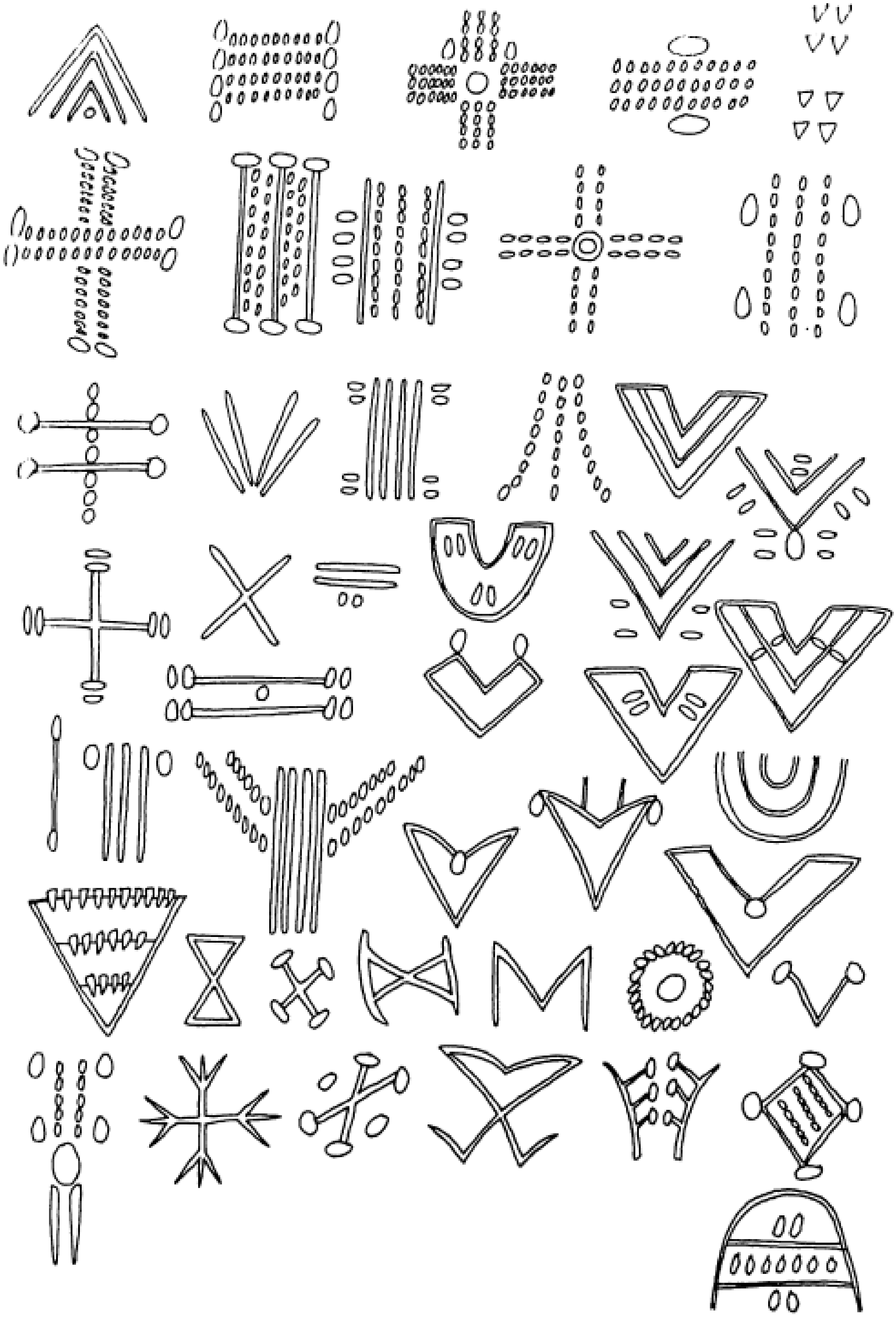
4.'The Futhorc developed out of the Phoenician alphabet'

Here we really get into guesswork. The Phoenician alphabet, as was related by several classical authors, was the source of the Greek, not to mention the Etruscan and Roman script. The old Greek script, called linear-B, used syllables instead of letters and fell into disuse after some unspecified catastrophe around 1200BC. After several centuries without an alphabet, the Phoenician sailors introduced their twenty-two letter alphabet to the Greeks, who speedily adapted it to their sound range. The Phoenician alphabet has several similarities with Hebrew but the question of who influenced who is rather unclear. Very little is known about the Phoenicians, who were skillful enough to build the temple of Jerusalem for Solomon but left no literature. Their culture is connected with the sea. They were sailors and traders unequalled in courage, cunning and diplomacy. Where they came from is a difficult question. Apparently their culture began in Palestine where desert dwelling nomads got mixed with a sea faring culture coming from some unspecified 'northern country'. There are some theories that connect the migration raids of sea people with Plato's Atlantis tale. The sea-people were finally thrown back by Ramses III who got the essence of the Atlantis tale from prisoners of war. It is possible that these sea-people got mixed with the Canaanite nomads of the Lebanon, creating the Phoenician race. In this case it might well be that those sailors from 'beyond the pillars of Hercules' (Gibraltar) brought some of the letters of their alphabet with them. Some scholars make this idea the basis for a claim that certain 'northern proto-runes' were the origin for all European script. Of course there is little evidence to support such ideas. What is certain, however, is the fact that the Phoenicians, earlier than the Greek and Romans, travelled out of the





Scandinavian Rock Art



Symbols found on pottery and urns. Neolithic cultures, Hessen, Central Germany, starting c.5000 BC

Mediterranean, discovering wide parts of Africa and sailing to the north sea and to Britain for tin and amber.

5. 'The runes developed in the north of Europe.'

This theory was very popular among scholars who did not like Rome (and who could blame them?) Rune type symbols dating around 3,500 BC have been found in northern Germany, and Scandinavian rock art from 2,500 BC shows similar ornaments. There are some examples of rock art given on page twenty-four.

These signs are symbols, not letters. Current thinking is that the elder twenty-four rune futhorc was introduced to Scandinavia around 400. Rune writing got popular at a much later date. The typical Scandinavian sixteen rune futhorc was developed during the Viking ages (800-1200) Now sixteen letters is a rather small number of sounds and certainly less efficient than the twenty-four rune system. The question 'why make an alphabet smaller?' has found no satisfactory answer so far. It should be noted that the Scandinavian sixteen rune 'younger futhorc' has a parallel in the sixteen rune futhorc of the St Gallen texts dated around 400.

6. 'The Futhorc came from Atlantis.'

Some scientists may shudder when they read something as fanciful as this. Rightly so, for very few occultists have bothered to read the original Atlantis texts (*Timaeus & Critias*), as given by Plato. For a start you should forget all the surrealistic stuff written by Blavatsky, the Theosophists, Rudolf Steiner, Cayce, Fortune, Grant, not to mention all the fantasy authors. Their vision might speak of a psychic reality; probably not of a historical culture. The idea of a super-civilization with atomic power and space exploration has nothing to do with Plato's tale, which is largely ethnological.

Let's look at some evidence. Around 4,500 BC the 'megalith' (big stone) culture began to spread all over Europe's coasts, leaving an overwhelming legacy of huge stone monuments, such as the dolmen of Morbihan, the stone avenues of Carnac, the barrows in Ireland and the stone circles of Stonehenge. They left hundreds of dolmens and barrow graves in northern Germany, Ring wall structures that were old when the first Celtic tribes stumbled upon them, and any amount of Menhirs (standing stones) on all Atlantic coasts as well as most coasts of the Mediterranean, and older than the Egyptian legacy. That megalith culture was spread over the sea is clear enough, where it came from is not. We do not even know whether they were Indo-Europeans.

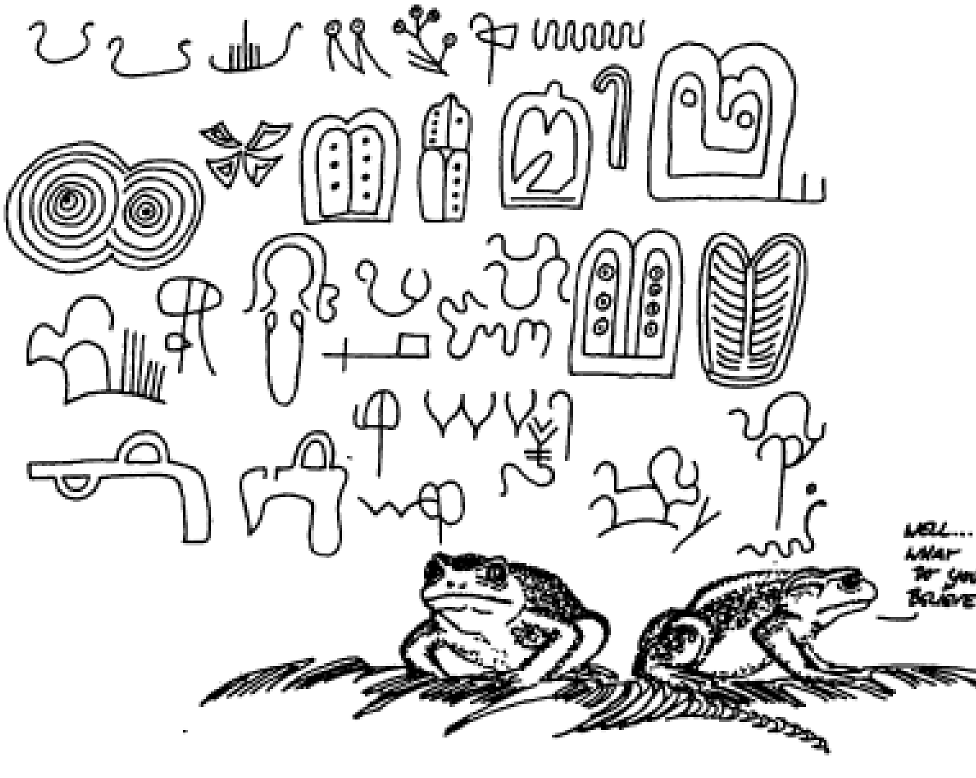
Try to imagine how much trade, religious conversion, scientific knowledge and military might are required to make so many different people and cultures raise very similar stone sanctuaries. If we imagine some advanced island culture behind these developments this might answer some difficult questions. Plato's 'Atlanteans' fit this idea remarkably well. Their island 'Abalus', 'Basileia' may well be the source for the tale of Avalon, Lyonesse and Ys, to mention just a few sunken islands of mythology. Usually such islands get drowned 'for the sins of their priests.' Most north sea countries have tales of the enchanted glass castle ('glass' was an old word for 'amber') on a magick island. It is interesting to note that this island is usually described as an accursed place of great evil, which contrasts nicely with all the etheric spirituality attributed to

Atlantis by esoteric idealists of the Zimmer-Bradley variety.

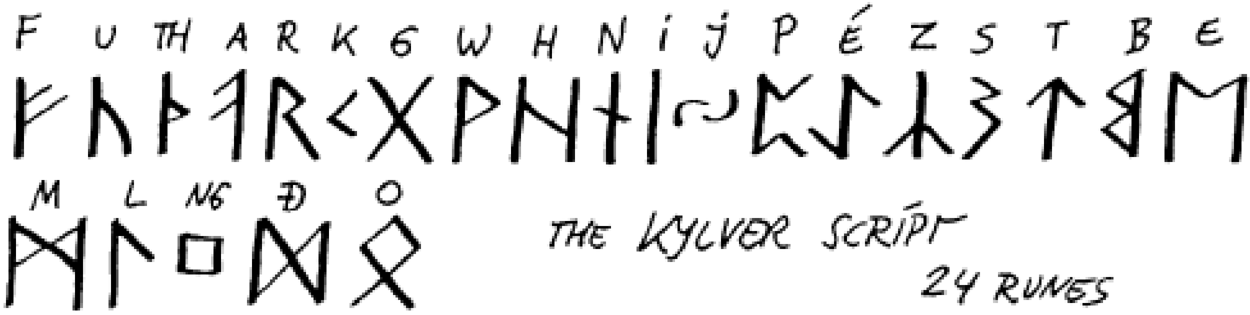
While it seems likely that Plato's Atlantis was an island on the Danish coast we need not insist that it was the only one of its kind. As to the origin of the runes in this place, or with the megalith culture, there is very little evidence. Whether the megalith people carved runes is hard to determine. I have been told that there are some rune-like signs in some Spanish dolmens. But in Brittany I only came upon symbols composed of curved lines. Below are some samples, dated between 4,000BC and 2,000BC

7. 'The runes developed out of the Vinca script.'

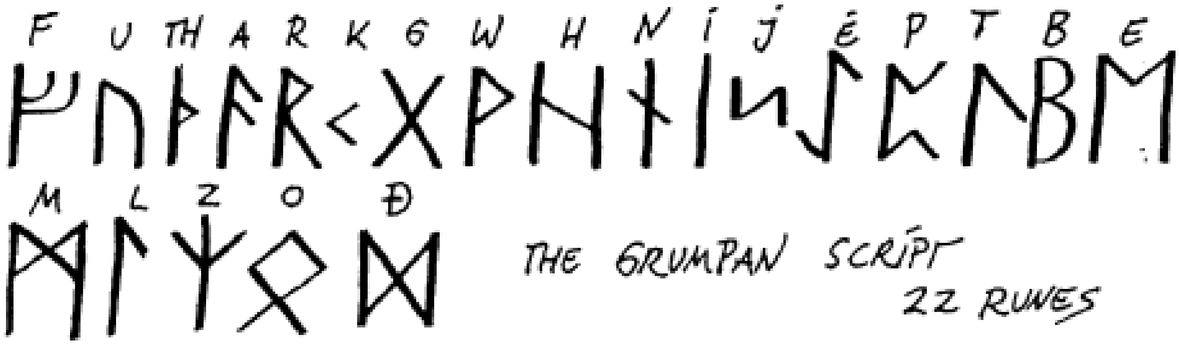
Where past generation of scholars thought of the Sumerian script as the oldest human writing extant, modern researches and new methods of dating have come to class the little known Vinca script as the oldest human writing known. The Vinca culture flourished c.5300 and 3500BC in the Balkans, reaching from Hungary, Rumania and the former Yugoslavia to the northern rim of Greece. Vinca, where the inscriptions were discovered, is about 14km from Belgrade. As far as we know, the Vinca script consisted of more than 200 signs, which makes it likely that it was based on syllables not letters. The signs were scratched into clay tablets. Apparently it was a sacred script, as all known inscription come from cult places and graves, far away from settlements, where not a single inscription was found. The Vinca people, as is believed today, were a cattle breeding farmer culture of non Indo-european origin.Some of their statuettes have been found, depicting either bulls or abstract female figures with wide hips. Male figures have not been found so far, indicating that the Vinca people were possibly matricentric. The signs of their script frequently resemble runes, which is hardly surprising when we consider how many signs Vinca script consisted of. This culture ended around 3500 BC - there is much speculation whether they were crushed by marauding Indo-European tribes or scattered by some natural catastrophe - leaving the Balkans in a state of an-alphabetism. It might be interesting to consider that about a thousand years later, the earliest Cretan script (Linear A) appeared. Its sixty odd signs show some similarity with the Vinca script, so possibly some of the knowledge passed south. Surprisingly, for a (supposed) non Indo-European culture, Vinca signs included the swastika and the wolf hook.


WELL... WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ?

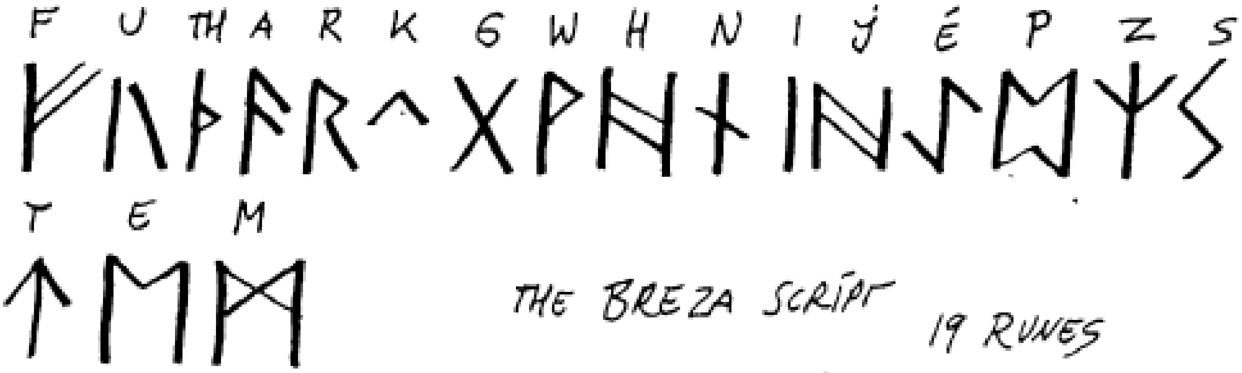
The Common Old Germanic Futhark Scripts


F U TH A R K G W H N I J P É Z S T B E
M L NG Đ O

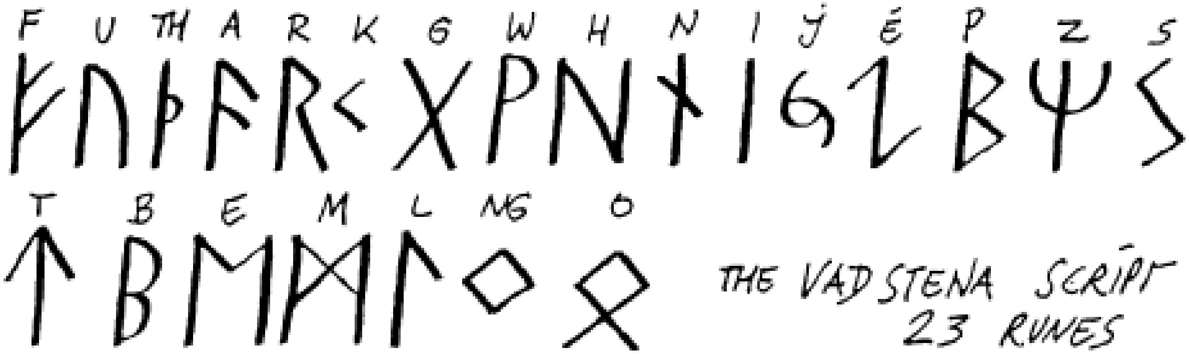
THE KYLVER SCRIPT
24 RUNES


F U TH A R K G W H N I J É P T B E
M L Z O Đ

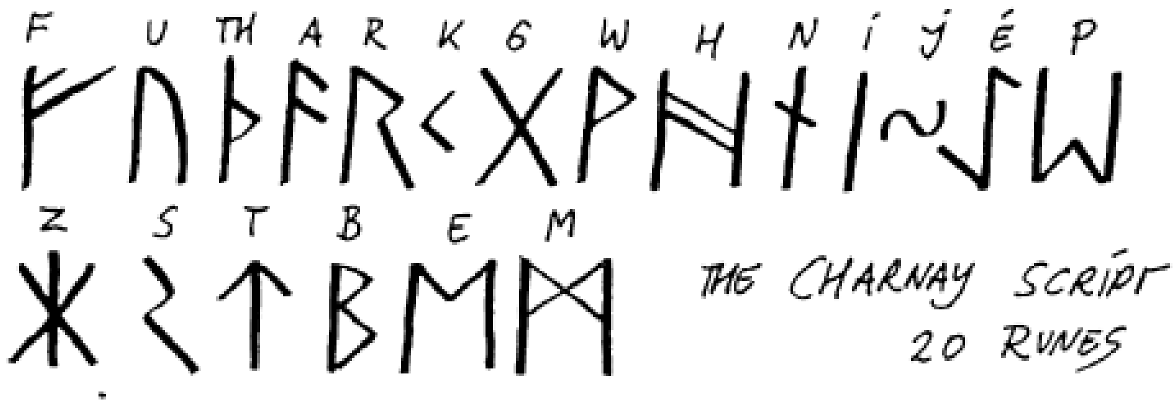
THE GRUMPAN SCRIPT
22 RUNES


F U TH A R K G W H N I J É P Z S
T E M

THE BREZA SCRIPT
19 RUNES


F U TH A R K G W H N I J É P Z S
T B E M L NG O

THE VADSTENA SCRIPT
23 RUNES


F U TH A R K G W H N I J É P
Z S T B E M

THE CHARNAY SCRIPT
20 RUNES

3

The Futhorc Row

Futhorc is the common name for the rune alphabets. The word is made up out of the sounds of the first six rune signs: ᚠ (F), ᚢ (U), ᚦ (Th), ᚨ (A/O), ᚱ (R), ᚲ (C/K). These six runes are the only ones which occur in the same order in all rune alphabets. There have been several distinct systems of rune writing in Europe. According to scholarly belief, the original futhorc was invented north of the Alps in the first centuries of our era. This system, called the 'common futhorc', consisted of twenty-four runes. As it spread through Europe, it was repeatedly modified. In Britain it was extended into up to thirty-three runes, in Scandinavia it was simplified to sixteen.

Academics like to treat the runes simply as a system of writing, and forget the sacred and magical meaning of the futhorc. How many sound symbols are needed for a functional alphabet? Twenty-four symbols can easily describe most combinations of sounds. Alphabets with more than thirty characters include so many similar sounds that we find it hard to differentiate them nowadays. In a system of sixteen letters we have to assign more than one sound to each rune, such as ᚠ (F/V), ᚨ (A/O), ᛒ (B/P), ᛃ (J/G) etc. Though inscriptions in such a system can still be deciphered, the text is far from easy reading.

In divination how many symbols are needed to describe the universe? As each rune corresponds to a specific type of energy/consciousness we may assume that the runes as a whole express the totality of the world. This is essential if we want to use them for divination. We have to be able to ask all questions and to receive all possible answers. How many possible answers are needed for a complete description of the world? The Chinese system of the I-Ching uses two forces (0 + 1), three levels (earth, man, heaven), eight 'atmospheric descriptions' (the Pa Qua or trigrams) and through their combination, sixty-four images. The tarot uses twenty-two trump cards and fifty-six lesser cards. The Hebrew/Egyptian Qabalah applies ten basic numbers/realities and twenty-two paths between them, which correspond to the tarot trumps. Geomantic divination deals with two states of energy and creates sixteen images from them. The sixteen is equally popular in the West African cowri shell oracle, which yields a fantastic range of 16 x 16 x 16 answers. Sixteen energy currents are classified in the tantrik system of the kalas (colours/energies/rays); if we double this number we get the thirty-two facets of the Qabalistic tree of life, and doubling these brings us to the 64 images of the I-Ching.

If the number were too small, we will have to overload the possible meanings in each symbol. This will reduce the precision of the answer. If the number is too great the system gets too complicated and the practitioner is required to carry around a small library! If we look at the sixteen rune futhorc systems we usually encounter theories claiming that the sixteen rune system is an adaptation of the twenty-four rune futhorc. This is true insofar as the sixteen rune row became popular in Scandinavia around the year 800, i.e. at a time when Christian power politics were busily exterminating rune writing in central Europe. Now, why would a functional system of writing be reduced to a far less efficient one, if not for the reasons of magick and religion? The Scandinavian reduction is meaningless unless we emphasize the sacred meaning of each sign, and consider the alphabetical use as a side effect.

Things get even more complicated when we consider that the Scandinavian system was by no means the first futhorc to use sixteen signs. The monastery library of St Gallen, near Bodensee, Switzerland, contains a few manuscripts with mnemonic rune verse dating around 400, which makes them at least three hundred years older than those of Scandinavia. The oldest of the manuscripts features a system of sixteen runes and comes from the country near Fulda, Hessen. As the texts are little more than a mysterious list for memorization they never attained the popularity of the English, Norse and Icelandic rune poems.

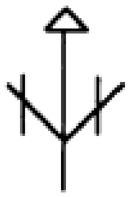
ᚠ... Feu Froma (first)
ᚢ... Ur Anmot (?)
ᚦ.. Thurs Thri Staba (three staffs)
ᚬ... Os Obana (upmost)
ᚱ... Rat Rinnit (runs)
ᚲ... Can Cliuvit (cleaves)
ᚼ... .Hagal Hardo (hard)
ᚾ ... Naut Nagal (nail)
ᛁ ... Is ᛅ Ar
ᛋ.... Sol Skinit (shines)
ᛏ. Tir .ᛒ.. Birka Bivit (tremble, quiver)
ᛚ.. Lagu Leohto (light)
ᛘ... Manna Middi (middle)
ᛦ... Yr Al (all)

older version 400 - 500

ᚠ.Feu Forman (first)
ᚢ...Ur after
ᚦ . Thuris Thritten Stabu (three staffs)
ᚬ... Os Is Themo Oboro (highest in heaven)
ᚱ... Rad Ritan Endost (written at the end)
ᚴ... Chaon Cliut Thanne (Gapes/adheres to)
ᚼ...Hagal Habet (has) ᚿ ... Naut
ᛁ... Is .ᛆ Ar Endi (and) .ᛌ.. Sol
ᛏ... Tiu ..ᛓ. Brica Endi (and) ᛘ.. Man Middi (middle)
ᛚ.. Lagu the Leotho (the light)
ᛦ... Yr al Bihabet (embraces all)

New version, 800 - 900

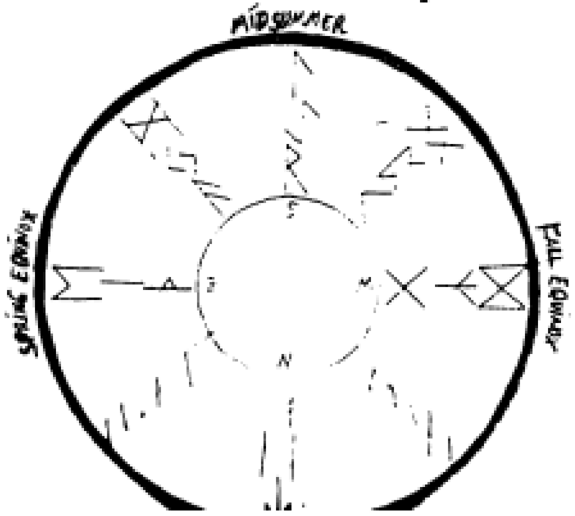
Here we have two samples of a sixteen rune futhorc independent of the Scandinavian systems. Note that a tree shape is suggested by the middle pillar of the structure and the ᚿ, ᛆ runes to its sides. These St Gallen alphabets show a lot of independence from the common twenty-four rune systems. Indeed they seem to be more closely related to those of Scandinavia, if we consider the shape of the runes. It seems hard to tell which of the systems was the root of the other.



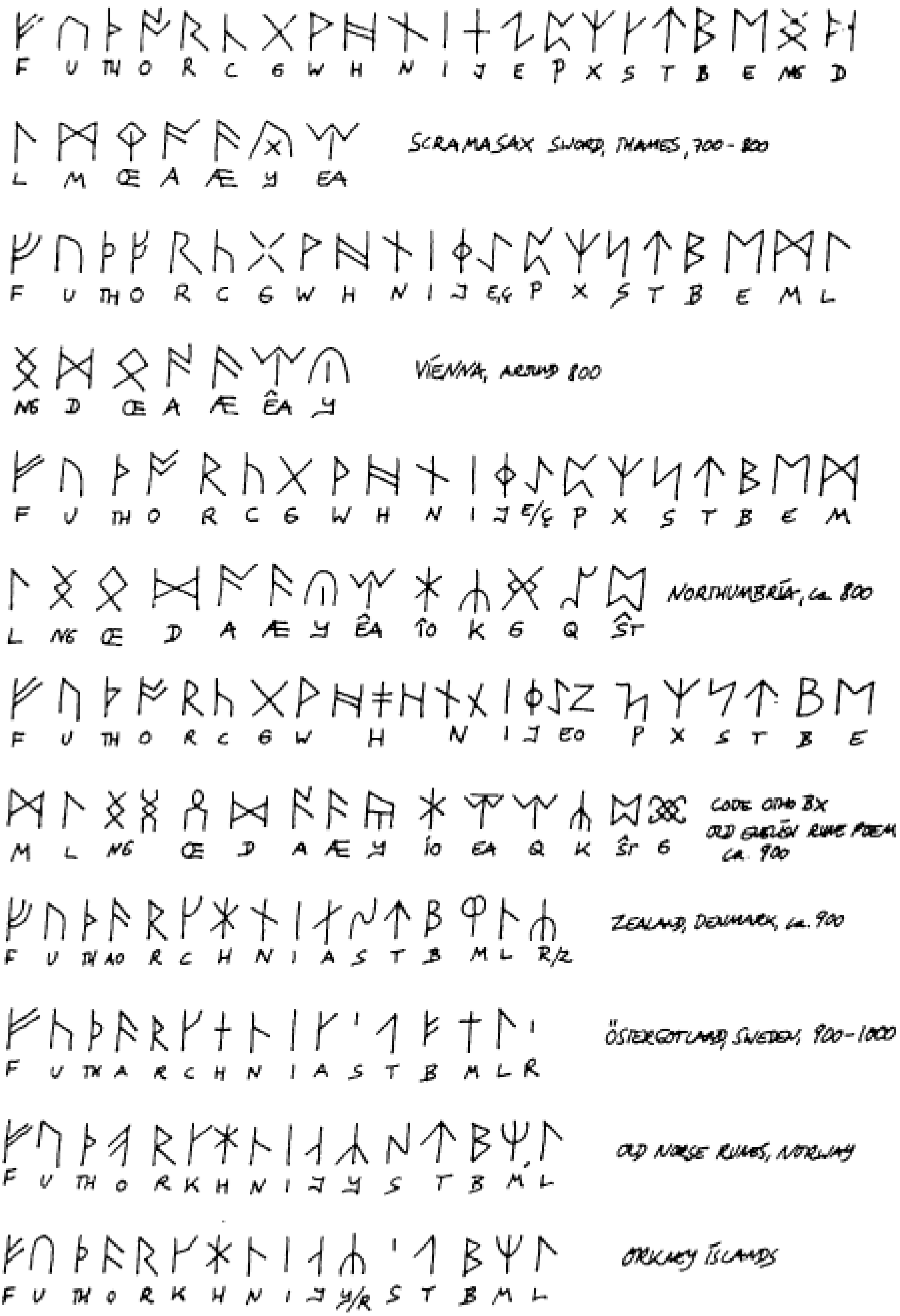
The old or 'common' futhorc consists oftenty-four runes which are grouped in three 'families' or 'eights' (ON Aettir). Traditionally, the three Aettir are attributed to particular deities. The first aettir, starting with ᚠ is connected with Frey and Freya, deities of life, growth, joy and abundance. The second aettir, which begins with ᚼ or ᚺ is attributed to Wodan in his aspect as 'Har' (the high) or 'Hotter' (the one with the hat/hood). Another valid link connects H with Helja, the veiled one of the underworld, or with the Hyndla, 'the wolfish one'. The second aettir is often believed to relate to shamanism and outdoor activity - notice the many nature phenomena, such as hail, snow, ice, fields, swamp, forest etc., in the series. Wodan as Hotter is a wanderer.

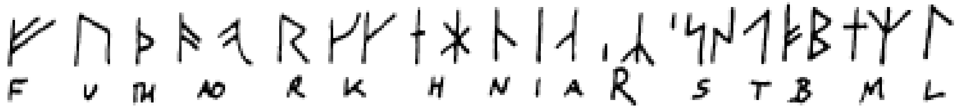
The third aettir begins with the ᛏ rune, which is attributed to the primal bisexual god Tiu, Tir, Twisto. There are several possible interpretations of the three aettir. One theory claims that the first aettir describes Asgard (the divine or ideal world), the second Midgard (the human or middle world) and the third describes Utgard (the primal or outer world).

Another interesting theory claims that there is a circles of the year hidden in the Futhorc. If we project the three aettir as a circle, this produces interesting results (see illustration):

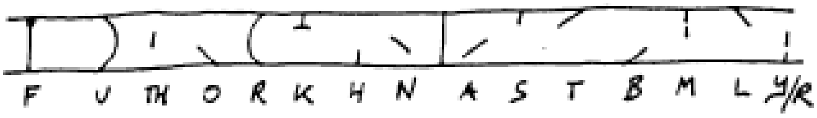


Some futhorc alphabets


F U TH O R C G W H N I J E P X S T B E NG D
L M Œ A Æ Y EA
SCRAMASAX SWORD, THAMES, 700 - 800
F U TH O R C G W H N I J E,Ç P X S T B E M L
NG D Œ A Æ ÊA Y
VIENNA, AROUND 800
F U TH O R C G W H N I J E/Ç P X S T B E M
L NG Œ D A Æ Y ÊA ÎO K G Q ŜT
NORTHUMBRIA, ca. 800
F U TH O R C G W H N I J EO P X S T B E
M L NG Œ D A Æ Y ÍO EA Q K ŜT G
CODE OTHO BX
OLD ENGLISH RUNE POEM
ca. 900
F U TH AO R C H N I A S T B M L R/R
ZEALAND, DENMARK, ca. 900
F U TH A R C H N I A S T B M L R
ÖSTERGOTLAND, SWEDEN, 900-1000
F U TH O R K H N I J Y S T B M L
OLD NORSE RUNES, NORWAY
F U TH O R K H N I J Y/R S T B M L
ORKNEY ISLANDS

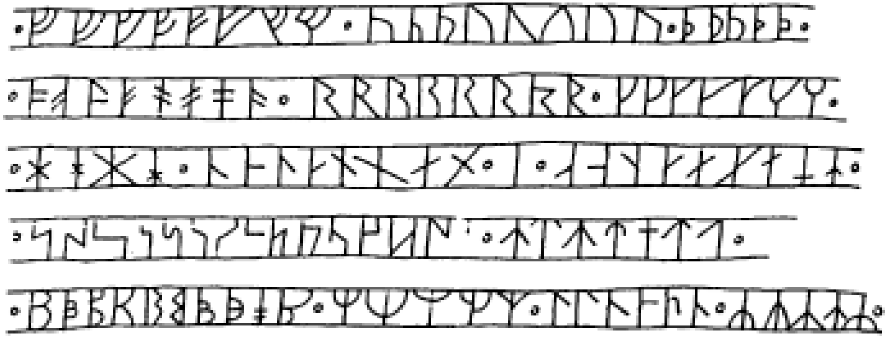


Swedish/Norwegian mix



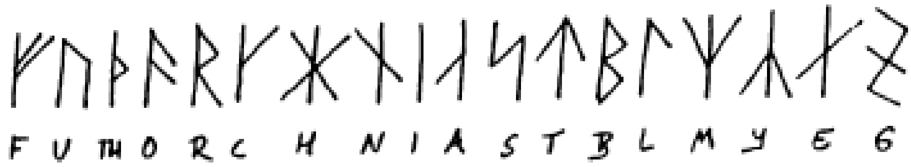
Hälsinge runes, Sweden ca.1100

Most of these examples come from the excellent *Runes* by R.W.V. Elliott. If you feel confused by the range of these rune alphabets, you should study the variations that may arise in a single district. The following table shows variations in rune writing between the years 900 - 1000 in the district of Uppland, Sweden.



The only rune that has no variations is ᛁ. It should be emphasized that the rune variations listed above come mainly from memorial stones, and have little if no connection to the older forms of rune magick. By 800 rune writing had become a popular fashion in Scandinavia. The same diffusion that makes the rune signs so difficult to read happened to the names and sound values of each rune. We encounter ᚠ as 'feu' 'fehu' or 'fa' on the continent, in England the name was recorded as 'feoh', in Scandinavia as 'fehu', 'feu' or 'fe'. The local variations make the etymology of each rune name a difficult affair, especially when we consider that there may have been countless variations we do not know about. Obviously we cannot afford to insist dogmatically on one specific name or mode of writing. What, then, is the proper name of each rune, and by what word should its energy be roused? To search for the correct name is a waste of time and effort. All variations are right insofar as they express variations of the proper idea. Proficiency comes if you concentrate on the sound itself and practice all variations that come into your mind. With Fehu you might experiment with something like, 'fifefafofufeofaefuo..', i.e. you focus on the 'f' sound and allow a spontaneous flow of sound variations to grow around it. As rune magick is not a ready made system but the revival of a somewhat mysterious tradition (rune = mystery) feel free to make your own rules and experiment. 'Chaos song' exercises are vital for rune magick. The song/tune/chant that 'comes-to-be' should be powerful and rhythmic, playful and passionate as you weave sounds with no concern for meaning. Free improvisation is important exercise, especially for introverted or tongue-tied practitioners.

I would also like to mention the variety of futhorc most popular in Germany nowadays. The system consists of eighteen runes, namely:

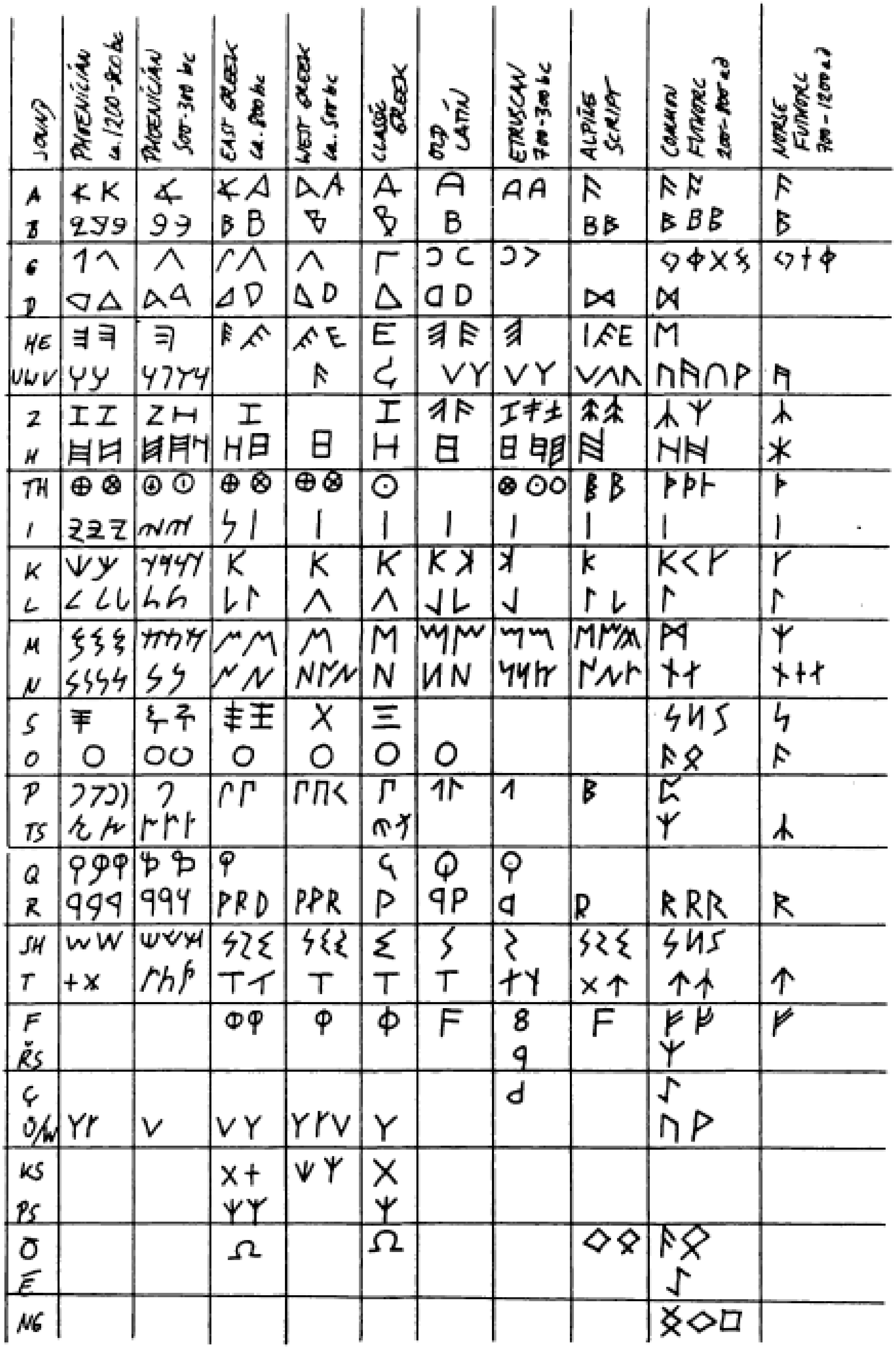


Sometimes a nineteenth rune ᛟ is integrated as a side aspect of ᚨ. This system lacks any historical verification. Indeed, we find that the symbolism repeats itself on occasion, as in the ᛅ and ᛆ runes, which are, historically speaking the same rune. The same sort of rudimentary thinking may be observed in the attempt to classify ᛉ as the 'male principle, reaching for the height' while ᛦ is supposed to be 'the rune of women, earth-bound and demonic.'

ᛋ as a variation of ᚷ is popular folk sign. It may be considered a 'reduced swastika' resembling the ancient glyph of the 'wolf hook' which graced some peasant houses. The middle line, as some say, is meant to break the power of the wolf. The sign has a history of at least six thousand years and was quite popular in the megalith religion. Many of the rune names of the eighteen-rune system show considerable divergence from any historic rune names.

At the turn of the century, the occult ideologue Guido List suffered an eye disease that left him blind for several months. During this time, List 'received' a vision of the 'true and original runes', eighteen of them, together with appropriate new names. Considering these word roots as the original ancient language of the 'true Aryan', Guido List proceeded to take the German language apart, revealing all sorts of surprising new insights. After some surgery, List recovered his sight and became one the founders of National Socialism. Being a prolific writer, List provided dozens of huge volumes on Aryan speech, symbols, heraldry, customs and even Qabalah (he firmly believed the Qabalah to be a German mystical system stolen and abused by 'fiendish' Jews!). And if you bother to work your way through mountains of useless information, you may find the basic notions of the Nazi movement buried there. By 1904, Guido List had already predicted 'the solution of the Jewish question', i.e. slavery and homicide, decades before anyone heard of the Nazi movement. Later, List added a noble 'von' to his name and became one of the leaders of the notorious Thule Society.

After the war the system was 'rediscovered' by Karl Spiesberger, also known as 'Fr. Eratus' of the Fraternitas ∴Saturni ∴. Spiesberger tried to get the Nazi influence out of the system but failed miserably, as most of his sources were leading Nazi occultists. Spiesberger is perhaps the most popular author on runes in Germany today and directly responsible for the amazing confusion in rune symbolism that is common thereabouts. After he got thrown out of the Fraternitas Saturni he went the usual way, namely selling dubious information in costly workshops. Now I would not claim that an eighteen-rune system is useless. Some have inflicted this system on the rune song of the *Edda*, which has eighteen verses, and though I cannot quite agree with this interpretation, there are plenty of modern pagans who like it. Anyway, it gives a touch of eldritch mystery to an entirely modern artificial system.


SOUND
PHOENICIAN ca. 1200-800 bc
PHOENICIAN 500-300 bc
EAST GREEK ca. 800 bc
WEST GREEK ca. 500 bc
CLASSIC GREEK
OLD LATIN
ETRUSCAN 700-300 bc
ALPINE SCRIPT
COMMON FUTHARC 200-800 ad
NORSE FUTHARC 700-1200 ad
A
B
G
D
HE
UWV
Z
H
TH
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K
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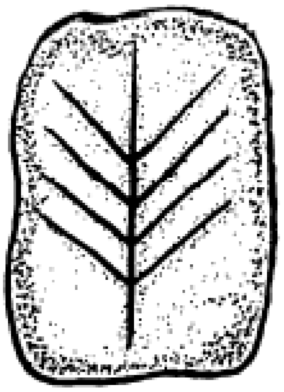
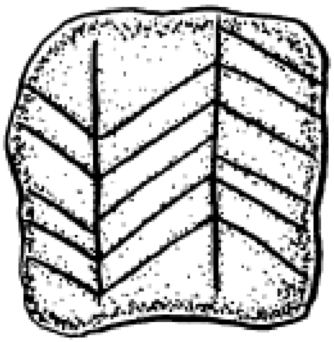
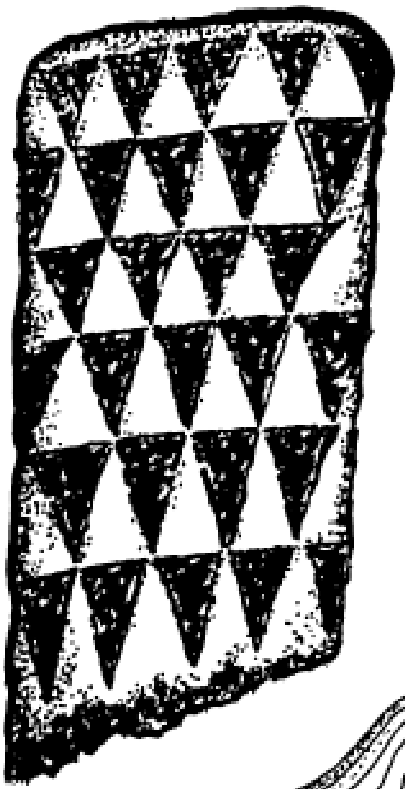
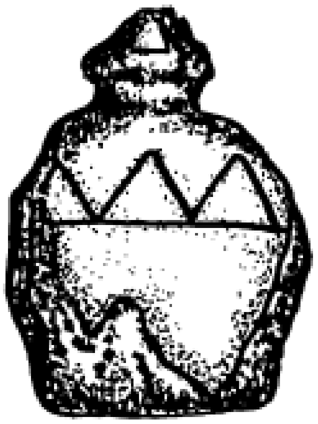
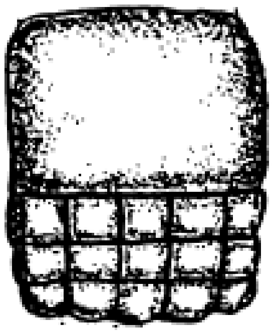
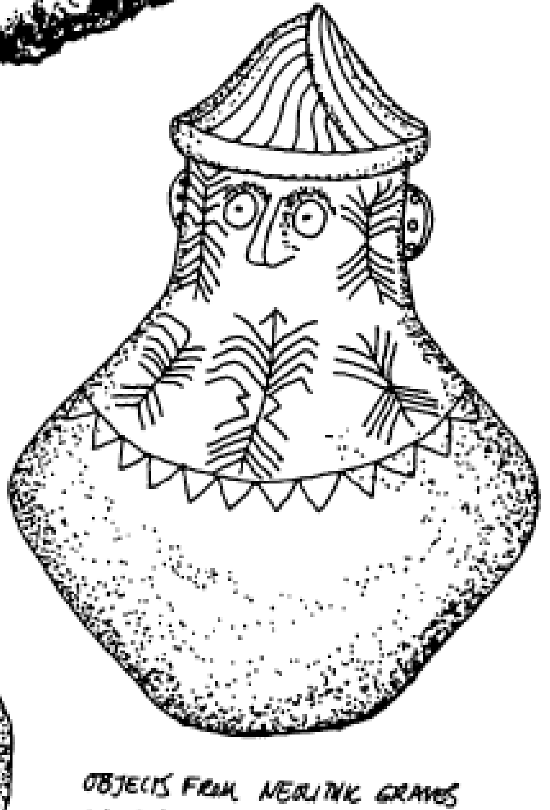


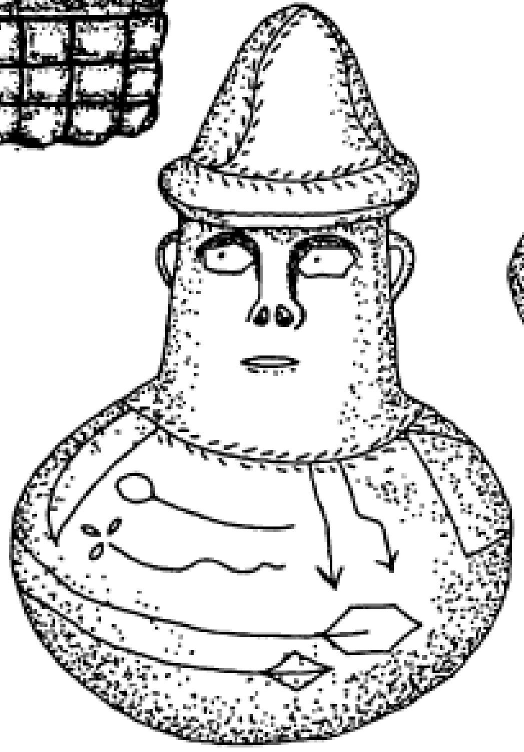












OBJECTS FROM NEOLITHIC GRAVES
IN GERMANY.
FACE-URNS FROM PRUSSIA, ca. 2000 bc,
SANDSTONE STELAE FROM THE
MARKWALD, BAVARIA (TOP LEFT)
FROM KASSEL, HESSEN (ABOVE)
AND STOCKACH, TÜBINGEN (TOP RIGHT).

4

Magical Rune Inscriptions

Apart from the considerable number of secular rune inscriptions, a number of magical texts have survived. Many magical inscriptions using runes are so reduced to their essentials that their meaning is lost. A typical example follows:

'Haduwolf set three staves: ᚠ ᚠ ᚠ ' stone of Gummarp, Sweden c.700.

This sort of text is not used for communication but to create a memorandum of some magical event. What the three fehu runes may mean is a mystery to academic and occultist alike.

Logathore
Wodan
Wigithonar
Awaleubwinix'

This is a rune inscription from a fibula found at Nordendorf, near Augsburg, Germany, it is dated around 600.

'Logather' means 'craftsman of deceit', 'awaleubwinix' is interpreted 'awa and leubwini shall give luck' - whoever those persons or forces may be. 'thonar' is 'donner', 'thunder' i.e. Thor. Even more enigmatic is the following formula:

TH:M:K: III : SSS : TTT: III: LLL.

Which can be interpreted as thistil:mistil:kistil, meaning 'thistle', 'mistletoe', 'chest/box'. The latter may refer to a coffin, which might in turn relate the text to the Balder mythos of death and resurrection. Frequently, certain words of power were carved into talismans, brooches, weapons and the like. The word 'ehwu, ehwe, awe, awa' seems to have been popular with Celts and Germans alike. It probably means 'sacred horse' and may refer to the horse cults described by Tacitus. The horse was frequently linked to the moon, look at the shape of the hoof and horse shoe and you can guess why. Horses were sacred to Rhiannon and Epona, two major Celtic goddesses, and to several gods of the Aesir, such as Odin. Another symbol of Odin is the eight legged horse, which as Mr Fritz Leiber points out so brilliantly, may symbolize a coffin and four people to carry it! Another goddess, called Gna, was sent out by Frigg on a horse that could fly. As you will see in in the section on the ᛖ (Eh) rune, the word Ehwu is also related to the idea of eternity.

'Laukar' is another sacred word. It means leek (allium porrum), a plant symbolizing fresh (first) growth and straightness. To the vitamin hungry north this plant was a blessing. The leek was traditionally given by fathers to their sons shortly after birth, not as food but as a symbolic gift. In the *Edda* the leek is the first green plant to grow after the flood. The symbol was very popular with the Scalds who spoke of 'sea-leek' when referring to a ship's masts, or used the proverb 'laukar löggr', meaning 'leek-straight laws'. Both concepts connect with the ᛚ rune.

'Lathu', another 'word of power' is supposed to mean 'to invoke'. 'Lathu laukar gakaralu' is on example of a mixed inscription found on a talisman. Sadly, we not know what the last word means, though some authorities try to connect it with a 'cuckoo', without really understanding what sense that might yield. The ancient word 'alu' has been found so frequently that a great number of different interpretations have been invented for it. One theory connects it with the word 'all', another claims that it means 'sanctuary/under divine protection'. We frequently find it in combination with the word ᚲᚢᚦ (kuth, God), be it as ᚨᛚᚲᚢᚦ or ᚲᚢᚦᚨᛚᚢ in Indo-European dictionaries it is said to have a distant connection with such terms as 'Ale' and 'hallucination', both refering to changes in awareness.

Then there are formulas of blessing such as;

'Thur uiki thasi runar' (Thor blessed these runes)

In Ribe, Denmark, an unusual item of jewelry was found. It consisted of a well polished disk made from human skull bone, to be worn as a pendant, and with the following rune inscription:

Ulfur
Odin
Hydyr.

Ulfur may connect with 'Ullr', lord of death and wintertime, who had many sacred groves of yew trees in Scandinavia, or to the 'Ulfr', that is, the wolf. 'Hydyr' is unknown to us.

Fragments of magical inscriptions have been found on the stones of Noleby (c.500) and Järsberg (same period).

'Rûno fáhi raginakundo' (runes do I colour that are known to the gods.)

'UbaR haite, hrabnar haite, ek erilaR runoR writu'

(Ub am I called, raven am I called, I, Eril, wrote these runes.)

Near Eggjum, Norway, a stone was found that covered a grave. The inscription dates around 700 and was placed on the underside of the stone, presumably to provide the dead with something interesting to read. The text is still the focus of much learned dispute and the translation far from satisfactory. Across the text, the outline of a horse was carved.

> 'Not to be touched by the sun
> Nor cut with iron is this stone.
> Do not (lay?) it bare (expose it?)
> When the waning moon travels across the heavens.
>
> May no misguided men lay it to the side!
> The man (the author?) has cast the flood of corpses over this stone
> And rubbed it into the oars of the (tired?) boat.
> By what shape did the God of warriors (Wodan?) arrive
> Here, in the land of riding warriors?
> Fish, floating in the dark stream
> Bird, screaming into the host of enemies!
> Alu against the evil doer!'

'Flood of corpses' is one of the many 'Kenningar' (poetic metaphors) meaning blood. Blood is quite important to rune sorcery. In normal practice, rune signs were lightly carved into wood or bone. Over the frail scratches a thin layer of soot was rubbed, which made the text visible and clear. In magical use, the ashes were replaced by blood. The literature is full of references to this custom, which is called 'bloten', which can also be a sacrifice at a feast such as 'midsummer-blot'. The blood was supposed to activate the latent power of the runes. Usually, some beast was consecrated and sacrificed for this purpose. The size of the beast depended on the importance of the occasion. The following passage comes from 'Egil's saga' (author unknown).

> Then Bard went to the Queen and told her; here would be a man causing dishonour to her, for however much he drank, still would he claim to be thirsty. Then the Queen and Bard mixed a drink with poison and carried it inside; Bard blessed it and gave it to a serving woman, who gave it to Egil and asked him to drink. Egil drew his knife and cut his hand, he took up the horn, carved runes into it and rubbed the blood over them. He spoke:
>
> > Runes did I carve into the horn
> > gave redness of blood to the signs
> > words did I choose for the beast's (i.e. the aurox)
> > the wild one's, root of the ear tree (i.e. the horn)
> > draught of merry maidens
> > we drink as we will.
> > Wisdom I seek, how wholesome
> > is the beer that Baröd blessed?
>
> Then the horn shattered and the beer splattered over the straw.'

As could have been expected, Egil took immediate revenge. The passage reminds us of the three essentials for 'bloten': Union of sign (runes) with word (song) through the medium of blood (deed). In this case, the blood supplied a direct connection of the wizard with his working materials. When blood from another source is used (such as a sacrificial beast) the fluid creates a link that binds the god (to whom the beast is offered) and the life force of the beast to the intent of the sorcerer. To use one's own blood, or certain other secret elixirs is to make the connection a more personal, subtle affair. Practical suggestions are revealed in Crowley's *Liber Al Vel Legis*:

The best blood is of the moon, monthly: (III 24)

The connection of runes and blood is also reflected in Crowley's *Liber Liberi Vel Lapidis Lazuli*

He shall await the sword of the beloved
and bare his throat for the stroke.
Then shall his blood leap out and write me runes in the sky; yea, write me runes in the sky. (V, 47,48.)

This link of blood and magick can also be found in the German word for 'sorcerer', which is 'zauberer'. The word goes back to OHG Zaubar, MD Tover, OE Teâfor (see list of abbreviations on page 201). All three words mean 'red colour, red ochre, to colour in red'! The use of red ochre in funeral practice (Neanderthal and Cro Magnon) has already been mentioned. In some cult caves rock formations that resemble female genitalia were 'reddened' in this colour; possibly body painting was another aspect of primeval ritual practice. The *Voluspa* tells us of the creation of the first human beings, who were made out of an ash and an alder tree.

They had no soul
nor sense, as yet
nor blood, nor motion
nor flowering colour.
Odin gave soul
Hönir gave sense
Blood gave Lodur
and rich colour. (vol. 18)

The formula that inspired mankind may also be applied to the consecration of rune talismans and similar items.

Another fine example for rune magick comes from Egil's saga. In chapter 72 of that violent epic we are told how Egil came to a house where a peasant's daughter lay sick and suffering in bed. When Egil enquired about her exhausted state, Thorfinn, his host, told him that healing runes had been carved for her, but that she had grown weaker ever since. So Egil had the young lady lifted from her bed. Under the blankets he found a fishbone bearing some runes. Egil scowled at the inscription, then carefully erased it and threw the fishbone into the fire. Then he had the people carry all blankets and pillows outside, to clean them by exposure to the sun and the wind. He spoke:

None shall carve runes
who does not know their use.
Many meanings have I found
inside the mad man's staff.
Ten of the magic runes
were badly suited to the bone
and folly did prolong
the sorrow of the maiden.

Then Egil carved some runes and placed them under her pillow. His patient was immediately refreshed and told that she felt as if she had only just woken from a sleep.

This fine example provides a much needed warning. If you intend to carve runes, solve the riddle of their meaning first.

At Groninen, Westeremden, a rune staff made of yew (8th century) was discovered.

Hamlet confronted Opham.
Before his yews, the breakers calmed
The surf did slow before his yews.

In a megalithic monument (a group of standing stones from Bjorketorp), southern Sweden, a rune inscription dating around 650 was found:

Forecast of doom.
I, master of the rune row
hid mighty runes in this place.
Restless through evil
shall die, whoever harms
this monument
of a hidden death.

Other rune inscriptions completely defy interpretation. A good example is the frequently quoted Lindholm bone amulet (c.500)

I Erila, am called mighty in sorcery.
AAAAAAAA RRR NNN B M U TTT: ALU.

We cannot even be sure whether Erila was the author's name, his tribe or of the amulet itself. In northern countries we frequently encounter objects, weapons, tools, amulets, that have been named to charge dead matter with a living spirit. This was especially important when the object was supposed to have character and to act spontaneously, by its own volition. For instance, the ritual sword from the river Thames had the name 'Scramasax', and carried a complete row of futhorc signs on its blade, the letters being laid into the iron in silver, copper and bronze. A spearshaft from Kragehul, Fyn, is inscribed:

Gibu auja (give good luck).

From Bergen, Norway, a considerable amount of rune texts have come to us. One of them is a long inscription found on a rune staff. As the wood has partly decomposed the text is full of gaps.

I carve healing runes
I carve safety runes
once against elves
twice against giants
thrice against trolls.
[...]
Against her who gives evil.
The valkyrie of the (giants?)
So she may not
However much she wants to
the doom knowing woman,
hurt your life.
[...]
I will send you, I will spell you

The evil and restlessness of the wolf-bitch
may you be restless
and full of giants wrath
never sit, never sleep
[...]
You love me like yourself.
: thurrist : Rubus: Rabus: Eth : Arantabus : Laus : Abus: Rosa : Gaua:

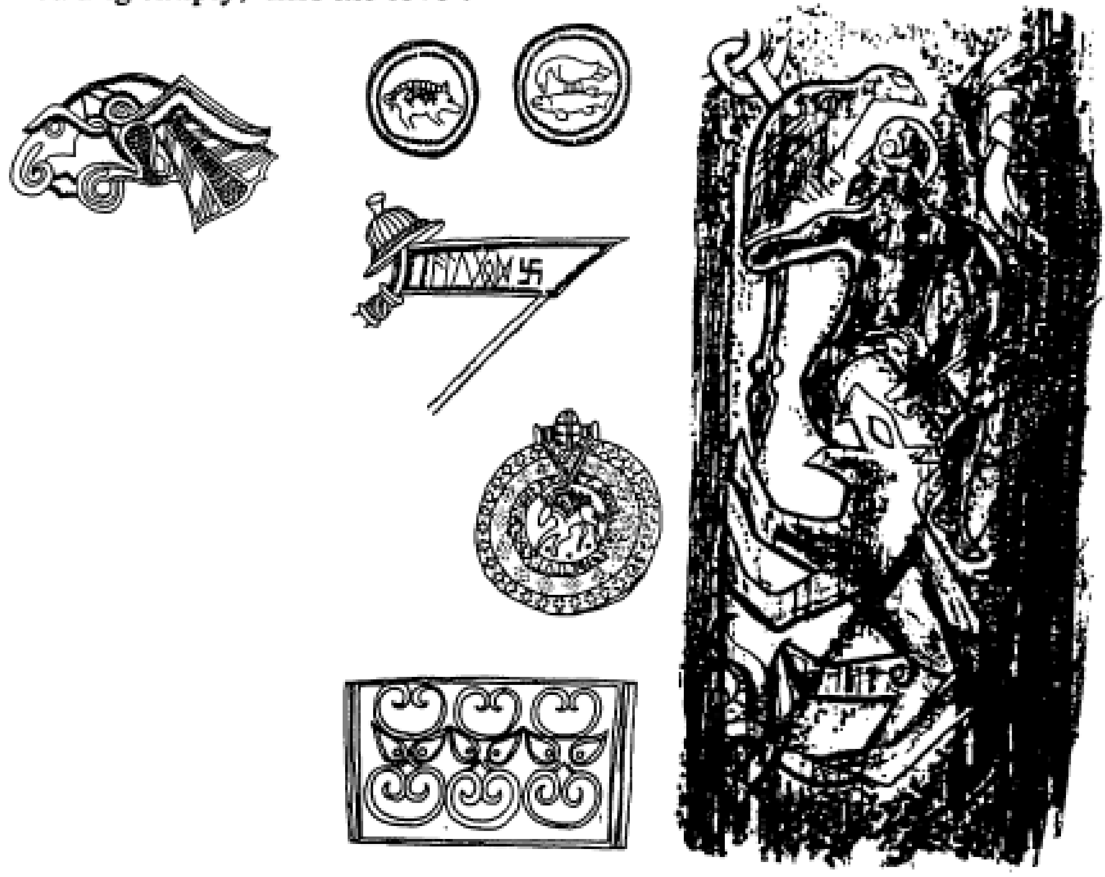
This curious spell contains many riddles. Observe the Latin influence in the last words, and the dubious motives of the sorcerer. We cannot tell whether the spell was meant to protect some woman, or whether the wizard tried to force her into loving him (as in the Skirnirsmal, which describes how the frost giant, daughter Gerda (earth) has to accept the wooing of Frey (fertility) or be cursed into sterility).

An exorcism or a love spell? In either case the operation was of questionable efficiency. Such practices tend to violate the true will of another; this means that even if they seem to function, they produce more trouble than they are worth. This sort of magick usually produces a very nasty recoil that can be disastrous to the sorcerer. Even Gerda has the right to determine her own place and time.

How much more simple hearted is another rune staff fragment from Bergen (12-14 century)

Ost : Min : Kis : Mik:

Meaning simply, 'kiss me love'.



Northern Europe left row top to bottom: saddle ornament in eagle shape, Gotland, Sweden; small disks, Mecklenburg, Germany (c.300); Rune text on the 'Rosettenfibel' Seeland 3-4th century; fibular from southern Sweden (with runes); ornament from Skara, West Gotland; Odin and Freki detail from the Thorwald cross, Isle of Man, 10th century.

5

Memorial Stones

The angular, straight shapes of the rune letters are especially suited for enduring inscriptions in wood or stone. The text was made legible by the application of blood, ashes or earth colours. Most rune texts on wood or bone have decomposed with the passage of centuries. What was carved on wood was written for the moment. Inscriptions in stone were for eternity. A considerable number of rune texts have survived by being committed to stone. Most of these come from Scandinavia. In Sweden, some 3000 rune stones have been found. Most of these stones had nothing to do with magick or religion. They were carved as memorials, to give a measure of immortality to the persons and events mentioned in the text. A very early example of this custom comes from Tune, south east Norway. It is dated around 500 which makes it one of the earliest rune texts in existence:

I Wiw
after Wodurid the bread-keeper
worked the runes.
For Wodurid
the stone was prepared
by three daughters,
the funeral feast
by the most noble heirs.

Wiw, (the consecrated) was probably the pupil and replacement of Wodurid (wild rider) in the priesthood. The stone is remarkable in several respects. At the time of writing the memorial stones had not yet become a popular fashion and were probably reserved for members of the priesthood or royalty. It is typical that early rune inscriptions are very rare and usually mysterious, suggestive of magick and ritual. Late rune inscriptions are pretty common and contain few if any references to pagan belief. The custom of setting memorial stones peaked at a time when most aspects of rune magick had already been forgotten, i.e. around 800 with the beginning of the Viking period. By this time the church had almost extinguished the use of rune letters on the continent.

In Scandinavia the church had a weaker hold over the population, so that a measure of simple rune sorcery would still be used on occasion. Nevertheless Christianity was the dominant religious and political force, which may account for the lack of pagan symbols or deities on memorial stones. Most of these stones come from the period between 900 - 1200. For the people of the Viking times it was fashionable to commemorate their deceased or absent relations with rune inscriptions. The stones are often very beautiful, with complicated design and original ornament. The inscriptions, however, are often dull, repetitious and deal almost exclusively with mundane themes. As Thompson has shown in his detailed study of Swedish runography, the contents of these inscriptions fall under four headings:

1. Memorials. E.g. 'X set this stone for Y, his father.' The text is usually brief and lacks all details. In most cases fixed formulas were used.

2. Prayer. Another standard phrase to call for divine blessing. eg; 'Gu∂hialpi X and ok gu∂s mo∂ir!' (God help X and also God's mother) The name 'Gu∂' (ᚵ ᚢ þ) could be used by Pagan and Christian alike. None of the old gods are mentioned on any of these stones.

3. Addition. This was added when the praying stone had become a memorial stone through the death of the person named.

4. Signature. Here the stonemason signed his work, often in a grand manner that required almost as much space as the rest of the text. eg. 'X risti stæin' or 'X marka∂i runar'.

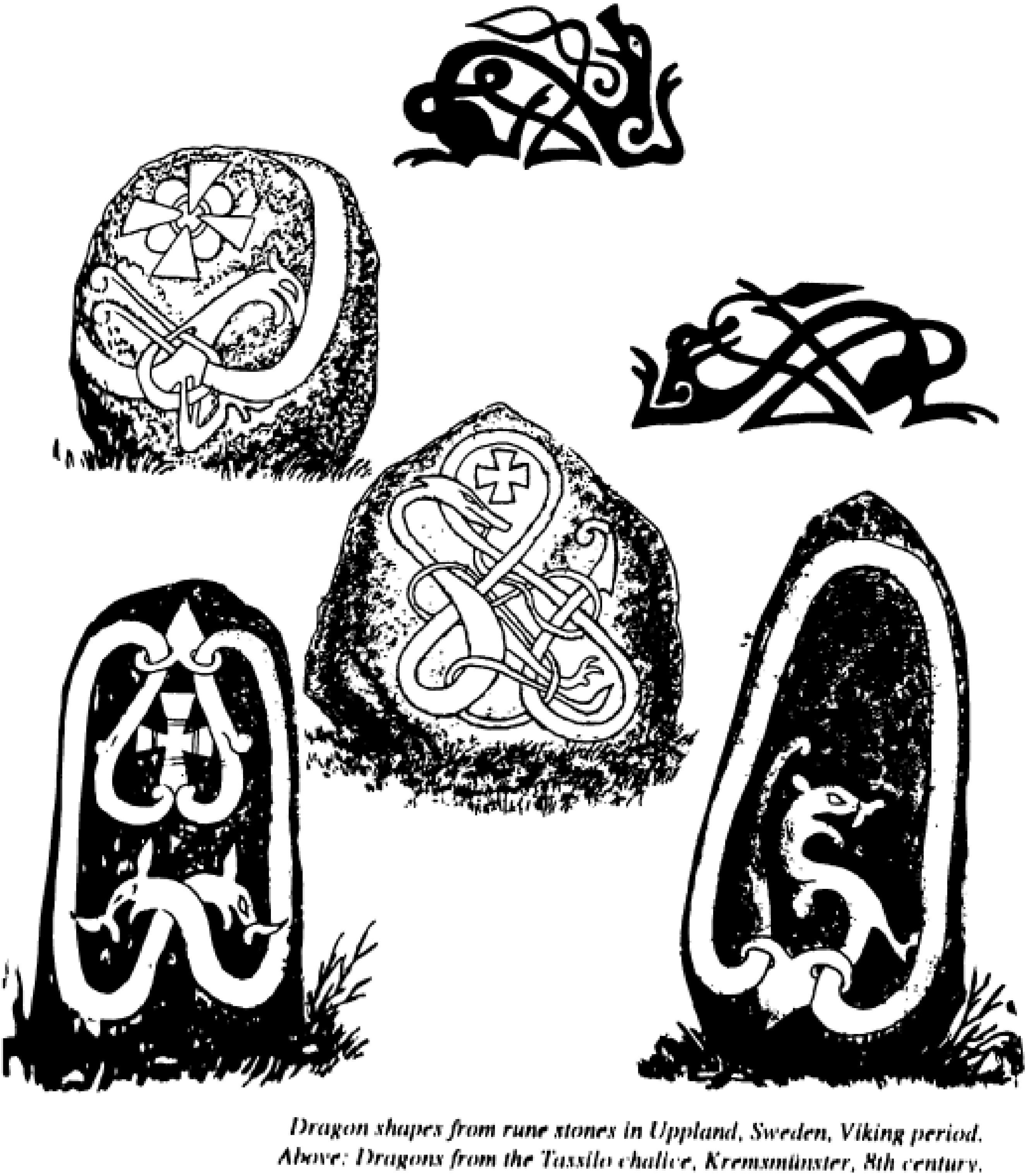
All contents of the inscription follow set formulas. We can only guess how these stones were used. Quite possibly people prayed for an absent relation or for a dead ancestor. European folk legends abound in stories of how the dead may return from the yonder-world to help their relations - that is provided their memory has been kept alive. There is a touch of Paganism in these stones that may go back to earlier periods. The text was usually carved between two lines, top and bottom, with the words in between. These lines formed serpent or dragon creatures, whose coils and convolutions made up for all the dullness of the text. The words were obviously of minor importance to the artist, and could be written from left to right or vice versa, at times in changing directions, as suited the stone and dragon shape. The dragon is a very old symbol so deeply rooted in Pagan traditions that to the Christians it was often synonymous with the devil himself. It was perhaps a concession to Christian belief that many of the dragons of the memorial stones appear to be bound i.e. limited and controlled.

The dragon symbol reminds us of the earth dragon out of whose flesh all reality was created, like the warring red and white dragons of Arthurian romance, the Midgardworm who surrounds the known universe, Skadi's serpent in the skies (the Milky Way) whose dripping poisons make bound Loki convulse in agony and the death dragon Nidhoggr who strips the souls of the deceased of all waste material. This popularity of the dragon idea is remarkable, especially when we consider that much of Scandinavia is too cold for snakes and reptiles.

Another common motif is the cross. Whilst the dragon represents a presence that is all encompassing, the cross supplied a fixed point, a focus centering the stone. This cross is not the Christian cross. Usually the length of its arms are equal. In some cases they are composed out of a central circle with four triangles radiating from it.

Arguably the customary use of the dragon motif comes from the old religion, and was popularized in Viking times as it added to the mystery of the stones. The historical illustrations below give some examples of the dragon pattern (without the inscriptions).

The shape is highly useful for magick talismans, symbols, stelae etc.



Dragon shapes from rune stones in Uppland, Sweden, Viking period.
Above: Dragons from the Tassilo chalice, Kremsmunster, 8th century.

6

A Genealogy of Magick

The runes as a system of magical cosmology did not develop at once. Many of the signs and symbols came from different periods of human development. These periods, often termed 'aeons' in modern magick, describe different ways of life, such as hunting and gathering, fishing, trading, agriculture, nomadic cattle breeding etc. The contemporary priestess Nema wrote:

> ...An aeon is defined by the prevailing mode of living and belief practised by the human race and characterized by distinct socio-religious motifs. (1983)

While Crowley and Kenneth Grant postulate linear aeonic models, saying that after the unknown stone ages came a matriarchal period, followed by the agricultural revolution and a patriarchal age, such models are far too simplistic to be of much use when we want to understand the history of magick. Much of what you find in this chapter may come as a surprise. When I went to school, the history teachers hinted that humanity is 30,000 years old, and that northern Europe had learned agriculture around 2000BC from people who had travelled to the orient. They believed that megalith sanctuaries were crude imitations of Egyptian temples and pyramids, and that all culture and civilization came from Greek or Roman sources. By the time I began writing this book, archaeologists had uncovered human remains going back to 60-50,000BC. Agriculture was practised in central Germany, and no doubt many other places, starting from 5000BC and many megalith temples were known to precede the Egyptian pyramids by one or two thousand years!

Today as I am reading the proofs, the models are changing even faster. Genetic research, for what it's worth, proposes that homosapiens have been around since c.150,000BC; some researchers, going even further, postulate the 'Eve hypothesis' (which is already out of date) and claiming a genetic age of 400,000 years for our species, in spite of the fact that not a single piece of evidence has so far been found. Twenty years ago, linguists had decided that the probable homeland of the Indo-Europeans lay in the vast Steppes of Russia and central Asia. From there, they assumed, such tribes as the Celts and Germans moved westwards into Europe. Others moved south to conquer India, or east, as the Tocharians did, into China. Today, the linguists are searching for the Indo-Europeans in other places and have proposed their origin between the Rhine and the Black Sea, which might mean that Celts and Germans are native Europeans, whilst other historians have decided on Turkey as the place of origin of the Indo-Europeans. Where three decades ago, cultures were assumed to exist almost independently, modern researchers emphasize the cultural influence of trade routes, many of which were in use from the stone ages. The Celtic noble found in a barrow near Hochdorf, Stuttgart, had a huge mead cauldron of Greek manufacture in his tomb and lay on a metal sofa with wheels, on a cloth of finest Chinese silk. Such evidence tends to confuse narrow thinkers. When we get to the topic of catastrophes, the going gets even worse.

In most mythologies, all over the world, the various ages are believed to end with an intense cataclysm. Not so in modern Darwinism, which is based on the notion that change is so slow nobody ever notices it. In the 1950s Velikovsky was hounded out of print, and almost had his books burned by the American government, for the heresy that humanity had seen great catastrophes and may well do so again. At the time, scientific fundamentalists had decided that there had never been any catastrophes. Today they are ready to admit some, such as the one that killed the dinosaurs, but insist that humanity has never experienced one. I will detail some of the catastrophes - whether they are real or imaginary - below. What you will read in the chapter is an attempt to produce a rough timetable for culture and magick in northern Europe. All dates are approximations and may well change, just as the evidence does, over the coming years.

What happened in ancient Europe?

From c.120,000BC: Neanderthal people. The first religious customs known to us: funeral rites, cult places, first symbols, social care for the old and weak.

50,000BC: First appearance of homo sapiens. Naturalistic art, abstract symbols, complex speech, ornaments, work division etc.

30,000BC: Cave art, naturalistic pictures of beasts, hundreds of symbols, half-human, half bestial figures, shamanism. Root runes.

8,000BC: The Ice Age ends: People begin to travel across Europe. First trade routes for salt, flint, amber. As the weather improves, people begin to settle for short periods. In southern Europe, the first beasts are tamed and bred.

6,000BC: Agriculture spreads northwards. Neolithic cultures expand along the Danube and across northern Europe, leaving thousands of pottery urns filled with grain or ashes. Britain is separated from the continent and becomes an island.

4,500BC: Megalith culture spreads along the European coast lines. Stone monuments, dolmens etc. Strong trade and possibly missionary work.

3,000BC: First phase of Stonehenge and Carnac: Megalith culture is at its strongest. Vast trading routes over the sea ways. Early rock art in Scandinavia. Bronze is discovered in Egypt.

2,000BC: Megalith culture seems to decline. The dolmen as a temple is replaced by its popular use as a barrow grave.

1500-1200BC: Here we encounter a gap. Possibly a great catastrophe took place, involving fire-storms, earthquakes, tidal waves and the darkening of the skies. Tribes from the north move south fast. These people conquer most of the Mediterranean but are finally defeated by Ramses III. Egyptian priests record the 'Atlantis' tale from prisoners. The distinctive Phoenician culture is born.

1,000-800BC: Another cataclysm may have occurred.

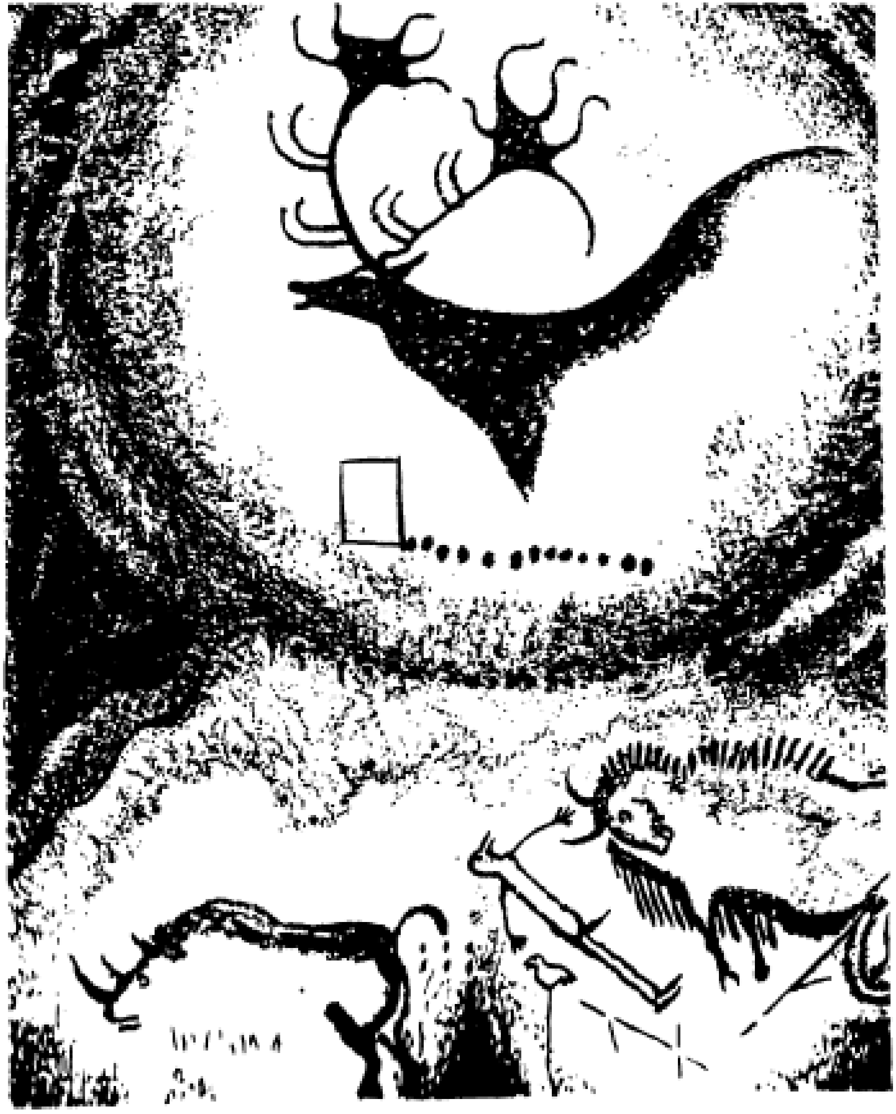
800BC: Celtic tribes have become a unique culture in Bohemia. They begin to expand westwards across Europe. Other cultures appear out of the unknown, such as the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans.

700BC: First groups of Cimmerian settlers move through Europe from the north east and expand westward slowly. Etruscans appear in northern Italy. Iron spreads.

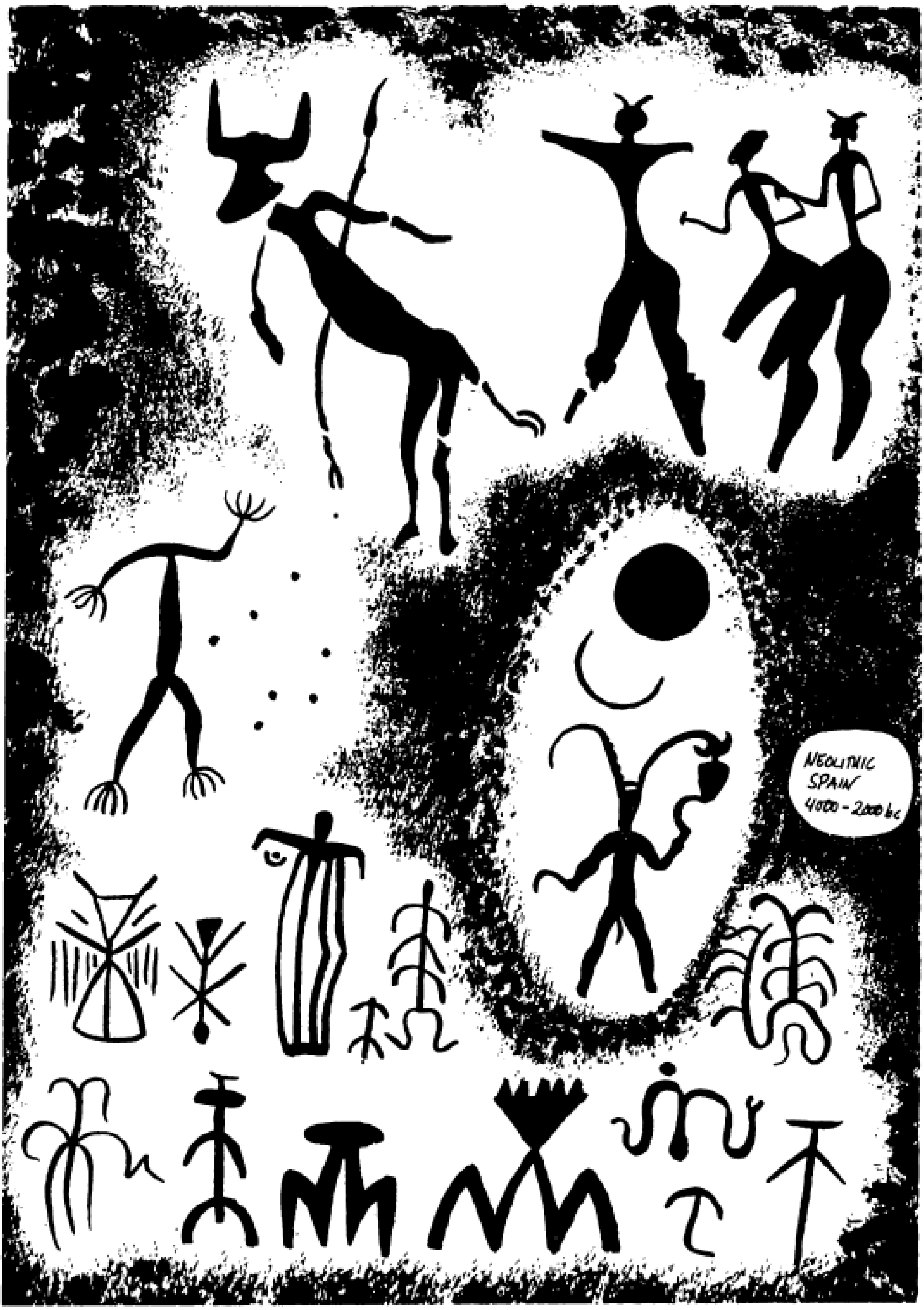
600BC: Greek traders establish colonies in southern France. Cultural exchange with Celtic tribes. Trade with Gothic tribes in southern Russia.

400BC: Celtic tribes settle all over northern Europe. Then they cross the Alps, run into Roman opposition, and sack Rome.

279BC: 'Galatians' (Celts) loot Delphi and move south east. After the death of Alexander, who had employed them as mercenaries, several tribes settle in Asia Minor



Cave art from Lascaux


NEOLITHIC
SPAIN
4000 - 2000 bc

and central Turkey.

270BC: The Celts are driven north again. Celtic mercenaries in most European armies. Meanwhile the 'German' tribes are recorded in Scandinavia and northern Germany.

191BC: Rome drives the Celts out of Italy and conquers the Alpine tribes.

113BC: Cimmerians, Teutons and like minded friends move from the North Sea and Baltic across Germany to the Alps, looking for living space.

105-101BC: The Romans encounter the Cimmerians and Teutons. The Teutons move through France, then to Italy where they are slaughtered.

58-52BC: Julius Caesar conquers Gaul.

15BC: Occupation of southern (Celtic) Germany by Roman troops.

Let us now examine the major religious currents. The Stone Ages have left us with a rich heritage of shamanic symbolism. Beast form magick was apparently very popular, i.e. the evocation of the beast spirits, and the shaman's transformation into bestial shape. Cave art of the earliest periods shows wonderful animal pictures with very few humans among them. Where humans appear, they are often clad in a semi-bestial shape, such as the bird-headed shaman of Lascaux cave and the swan headed sorcerer from Val Camonica.

In later periods we encounter many feminine statuettes, many of which have no face. There are also representations of hunters wearing horns, indicating that the major deities of modern wicca are rooted in this period. The symbols of the time are often those of hunting.

The Neolithic revolution changes the way of life. Its major symbolism connects with grain and fruit, and the rebirth of the grain out of the seed. People began to settle, to work in the fields, to surround their villages with walls of thorn bushes. The cycles of life were measured, as the regularity of the year is of vital importance to the long-range vision of the farmer. While the hunter-gatherer plans in months or years, the farmer plans in generations.

So called Fertility cults, involving the ritual death and rebirth of the corn-king, are typical of this period. The uncertain gods of the hunter were replaced by the more predictable deities of the peasants. There are several Neolithic cultures in central Europe. Agriculture became popular in Germany around 5,000BC. We known next to nothing about their spiritual outlook. What these people left is a heritage of pottery. Hidden in the soil are thousands of urns and vessels, containing grains and ashes which have survived the millennia. These people were arguably the Indo-Europeans.

Who were the Indo-Europeans?

For a start, the term does not refer to some nation or culture specifically. The Indo-Europeans cannot be located on a map. They are a hypothetical culture and their language is a reconstruction. It was the linguists who discovered them, during the last century. Scholars examined the similarity of terms in various languages. The word 'mother' for instance is 'méta' in Sanskrit, 'Mater', or 'Meter' in Old Greek, 'Mater' in Latin, 'Mothe, Muti', in Old Prussian, 'Mathir' in Old Irish, 'Mati' in Old Slavonic and 'Matar' in Tocharian. Such similarities show us relations between languages, and when we find that in certain languages the oldest words are related, we can be fairly certain that these languages had a common origin. The Indo-European family of languages consists of two branches, The 'Kentum-languages' and the 'Satem-languages'. Kentum tongues are Celtic, German, Venetian, Illyrian, Talic, Greek, Hethitic, Luvian and Tocharic.

Satem Languages are Balto-Slavic, Albanian, Thracian, Phrygian, Armenian, Iranian and Indic. These two groups of languages came from a common root, a mutual culture that probably split up before 3,000BC, to migrate and develop into many other cultures. Studying the word roots, linguistic science produced a catalogue of terms that were common to the earliest Indo-European cultures. Such ancient words are family and community terms, numbers and descriptions of daily life. We can be reasonably sure that the Indo-Europeans culture practised agriculture before the languages grew apart and we can make educated guesses at their homeland. Herman Hirt claims that the following words were known to these people:

Climate: ice, hail, snow, mountains, plains, rivers, lakes (whether the ocean was known is uncertain)

Tools: quern, spade, plough, ship, sickle, sieve, wagon, axle, wheel, yoke.

Beasts: dog, cow, cattle, goat, pig, horse, sheep, eel, blackbird, aurox, bear, beaver, bee, finch, squirrel, elk, duck, otter, fox, geese, jay, hen, hare, herring, weasel, deer, crow, hedgehog, crane, lynx, lice, mice, raven, sparrow, sturgeon, wolf.

Trees: birch, yew, oak, alder, ash, fir, hazel, lime, elm, willow.

From such studies, we know that the Kentum languages were spoken in forest country, by people who lived by agriculture, cattle breeding and fishing, while the Satem languages were spoken in dry plains country, by people who bred sheep and cattle, moved around in a semi-nomadic fashion and knew little agriculture.

According to Lothar Kilian[1] the roots of the Indo-European peoples go back to c.10,000BC, that is, to the last Ice Age. At that time the people living in northern Europe found themselves largely isolated by the Alpine ice barrier to the south and the Scandinavian ice to the north. Kilian speculates that the common Indo-European tongue was formed under these conditions, as was the light skin colour. Recent researches point to their original location between central Russia, the Black Sea and the Rhine. Here we find that the Indo-European word roots are the oldest in evidence.

This ends the speculation of 'where did the Germans and Celts come from?' As they didn't come from outside but developed where they were. On the other hand, some Indo-European cultures did a great deal of travelling, such as those Satem-branches who emerged in India around 2,000BC, conquering the local culture and setting themselves up as rulers and priests. On close examination, the word 'priest' and 'Brahman' come from the same root. We find the German 'Wodan' reflected in the Indian wind god 'Vata'. Another branch of the Indo-European people, the Tocharian culture were described by the Chinese in 170BC, as living less than 500km from Peking. Linguistic studies, for all they may reveal, have the disadvantage of being so thoroughly abstract. The archaeologist who finds some bit of pottery, a clay rattle, a skull or some stone alignment will have no idea what sort of language these things

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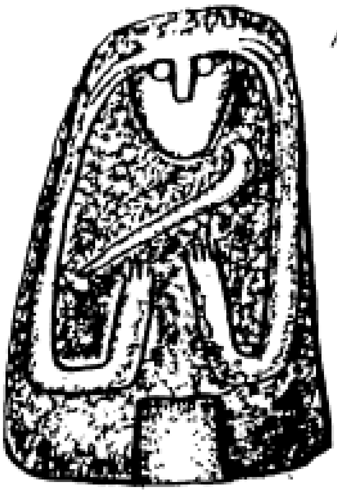
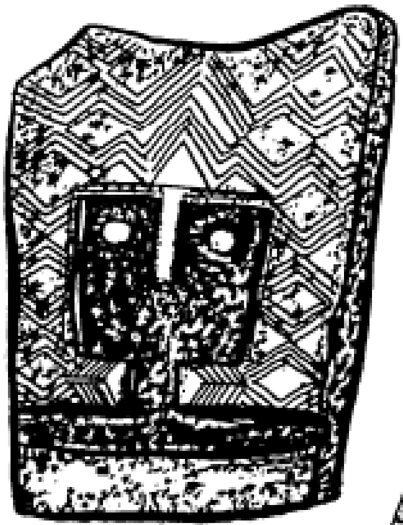
[1] *Zum Ursprung Der Indo-Germanen* (Habelt, Bonn 1983)

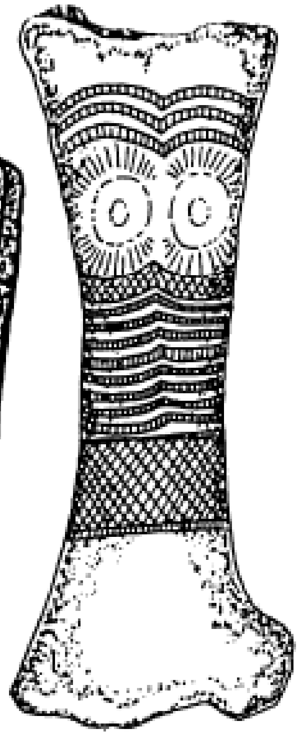
MEGALITH PERIOD ART



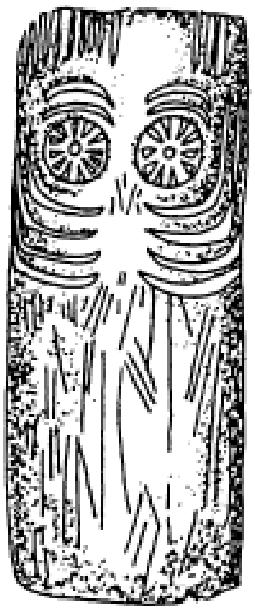
ROSSEIRONE, GARD



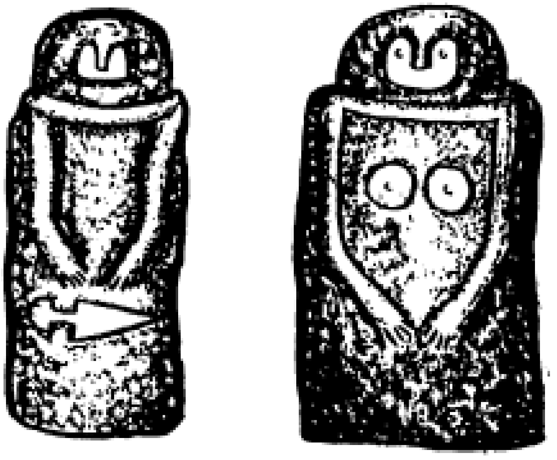
STELE DE LAURIS, VAUCLUSE



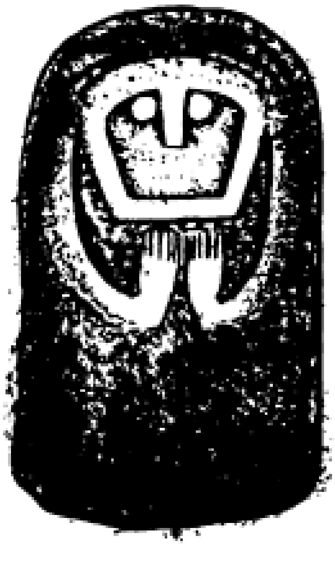
ALMEIRA



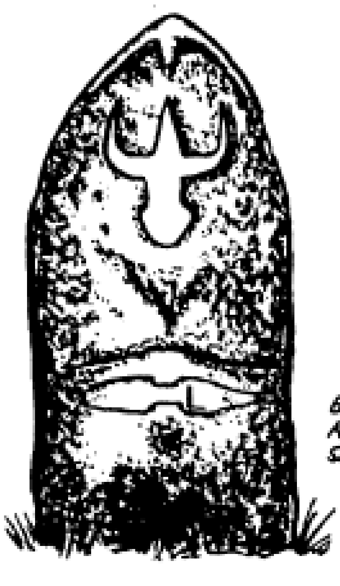
ESTRAMADOURE



← LUNIGIANA, ITALIA



SAINT BENEZET, GARD



BENNA ARRELE, SARDINA

connect with. Nowadays, science assumes that the pottery cultures and the Beaker cultures were Indo-European, while the Megalith people were not. No doubt these theories will inevitably be superseded by others.

Megalith religion, named after its great stones, is much better known. The stones were meant to endure. To this day, the standing stone or menhir symbolizes the phallus of the sky god, while the dolmen, or barrow grave, symbolizes the sacred womb of the earth mother. The early dolmens of Brittany were meant as ritual sites; it was a much later development to use these structures to bury petty chieftains in.

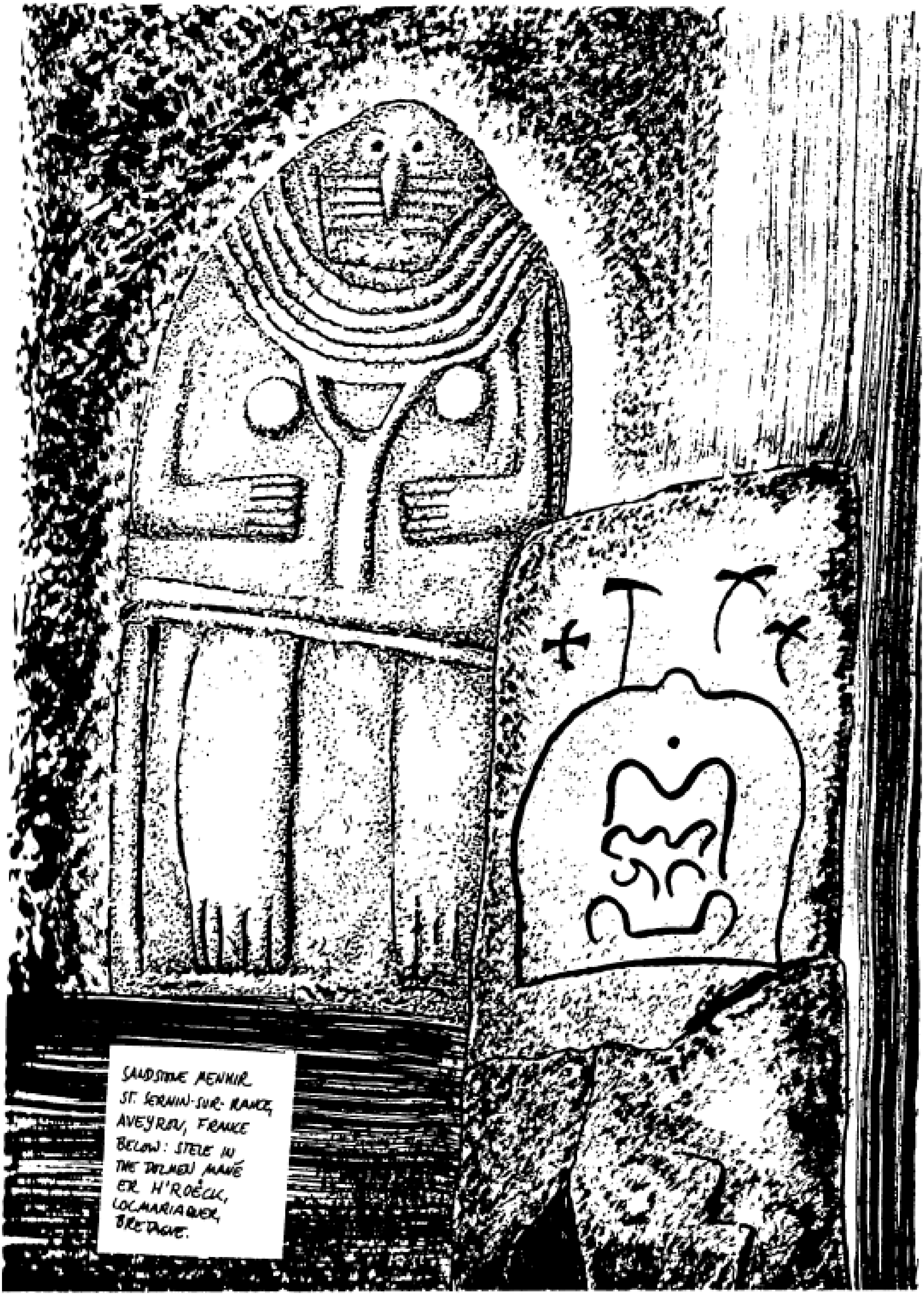
One of the fascinating aspects of megalith religion is that it spread along all European coasts, from Scandinavia to North Africa, from the Canary islands to the Middle East. Along these coasts, and frequently far inland, fantastic stone structures were raised which incorporated knowledge of astronomy, impressive technology and which probably required a work force that defies our comprehension.

What made so many people work so hard? How much religious effort and trade is required to spread such a cult? How much wealth and armed force is required to raise such fantastic work forces as built the stone avenues of Carnac, the henges of Britain, the temples of Malta and the ring walls of Germany?

Now for the catastrophes. In the 1940s, the anthropologist Immanuel Velikovsky began to collect evidence on the legends of the great flood. Such legends, describing one or more cataclysms, are common, not only in the Mediterranean mythology, but also in more than 200 cultures all over the world. In Plato's *Timeaus*, (22-23) an Egyptian priest is quoted saying that many catastrophes have befallen humanity: 'The greatest through fire and water, lesser ones through a thousand different reasons. What they might say among you [the Athenians] of Phaeton, the son of Helios, who once mounted his father's chariot and who destroyed the surface of the earth by fire, as he could not keep the path of his father?' This may be related in the form of a myth, but it is true and comes from irregularities in the motions of the celestial bodies that circle around Earth, and from the destruction of the Earth by great fires as it happens after long ages.' Patronizingly, this priest compared the Athenian's historical knowledge with 'children's stories', mocking them for speaking of one flood when there have been several.

Velikovsky, who unearthed an immense amount of data on such catastrophes, swiftly became unpopular with the scientific fundamentalists of his time. He was blacklisted, his publisher blackmailed, and his work ignored as much as possible. Even Albert Einstein's attempts to support his studies went unnoticed and when Einstein died, so did Velikovski's reputation. The idea that humanity indeed witnessed great catastrophes, in early history, is still taboo to many, suggesting, at is does, that civilization is not the end product of a long and weary road to progress, but that it existed many times, between cycles of order and barbarism. Consider the exodus of the Israelites, as they fled Egyptian slavery. We hear that the Lord visited several plagues on Egypt, including perpetual darkness, locusts and a rain of blood. The Egyptian papyrus *Ipuwer* describes the same episode. Here, as in the *Bible*, we read of a 'rain of blood' that fell from the skies, turning all water red, killing the fish, and leaving the people to dig water holes near the stream.

'All the waters of the stream were transformed into blood,' wrote Ipuwer, 'plague



SANDSTONE MENHIR
ST. SERNIN-SUR-RANCE,
AVEYRON, FRANCE
BELOW: STELE IN
THE DOLMEN MANÉ
ER H'ROËCK,
LOCMARIAQUER,
BRETAGNE.

is all over the country, blood is everywhere.' Both Ipuwer and the author of *Exodus* describe how the beasts died in the fields, as did all humans who couldn't hide in their homes. Velikovsky found reference to the same blood-rain in Tartar mythology and the Orphic hymns. It is also mentioned in the *Kalevala*, the collection of Finnish spells and sagas. Sadly we cannot make much use of this epic, as its collector Lönnerot, was too creative in his arrangement of the song material. Both *Exodus* and *Ipuwer* agree that after the blood rain, sand, pebbles, dust, rock and stones came falling from the sky and that all trees, plants and the harvest were destroyed. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods and the like followed, and the skies became dark for years. The same events are well described in other mythologies. The *Edda* is full of details on this topic. In the 'Hrafngaldr Odins' the dwarves who support the Earth and skies lose their strength so that the heavens topple into the gaping void, Earth and Sun lose their places and the sinking Sun seems to be pulled up again - much like the episode in *Joshua* 9.10 that relates how the Sun stopped in its course, and its parallel in Mayan mythology, which speaks of an endless night. When the sun finally rose, it came from a new direction. Indeed, Herodotus was told by Egyptian priests that there have been many changes in the motion of the sun and that in two ages, the Sun used to rise from the west. The Magical *Harris Papyrus* refers to a cosmic battle of fire and water, during which the Earth topples, south becoming north. Ipuwer wrote that the Earth fell over, and rotated like clay on a potter's wheel. This is quite close to the Navaho mythology, which related that one of the ages ended when the Earth-axis deity left its place, or to the *Edda* 'Grottasongr', which describes how the golden age ended when the two giant ladies Fenya and Menya ceased turning the huge world quern. Indeed the *Edda* is full of references to cataclysmic 'end of the world' scenarios. Nine worlds are mentioned frequently, which in the old days, did not only describe places but ages. As in older mythologies, the end of the world or age was usually marked by a catastrophe. Like Noah in the *Bible*, the giant Bergelmir escapes a great flood in a boat, while all of the other giants are drowned. Another cataclysm took place when the all-inclusive giant Ymir was slain by Odin and his brothers, who proceed to build a new world out of the giant's carcass. Such world cycles can be found in most mythologies. Some cultures, such as the classical Greek, knew of four worlds, as did the Hopi and Navaho. The Maya people of ancient Mesoamerica counted seven distinct worlds, as does the *Visuddhi-Magga*, a classic Buddhist text, and the Avesta literature of Persia says the same. The Chinese go beyond this and detail ten ages.

In the *Eddas* we are told that in the beginning, neither Sun, Moon nor stars knew their places, until the regents went to 'the chairs of law giving' to calculate the times and the seasons. We can understand this as a psychological metaphor, describing how order is found in chaos, but we could also see it as a historical incident. Numerous cultures have myths and histories describing this event. Just to blow your mind I would like to mention all known ancient cultures used to calculate the year as 360 days, the month being 30 days long. We can find this information in the classical astronomical texts of Vedic literature, in the *Bundahish*, a classical Persian text, but also with the Babylonians, Assyrians and ancient Egyptians, the eldest known Greek and Roman traditions as well as the Chinese and Mayan. Modern science likes to explain this by claiming they all copied the wrong numbers from each other. By 700BC, most of these cultures simultaneously introduced five more days to their year. Plutarch claims that in the days of Romulus (8th Century BC) as Rome was founded, the year still had 360 days, in Greece two of the 'wise of Athens', Thales and Solon were the first to calculate that the year was longer than 365 days and the moon's cycles shorter than 30 days.

The *Voluspa* mentions the regents on their chairs several times but without the data we would like to see, as the text is badly corrupted. In northern countries, the evil force that ends the age is known as the Fenris wolf.

He feasts on the marrow of fallen men
and stains the halls of the blessed with blood
the sun's shining darkens in coming summers
all weathers are wild: you know what this means? (*Voluspa* 33)

Quite possibly the blood stains are synonymous with the 'rain of blood'. When the wolf breaks its chains, the 'twilight of the regents' begins. Sun and moon are devoured by the beast, and the Fimbulwinter begins, a winter that lasts for years.

The Earth screams, evil Disir fly
and men spare each other no more
Axe ages, sword ages when shields split
Wind ages, wolf ages, before the world stumbles
(*Voluspa* 46)

With the call of the Gjallarhorn, the middle world bursts into flame. As the gods and heroes set out to meet their doom, Earth herself is thrown out of her path.

The sun turns black, Earth falls into the sea
The heavens hide the joyous stars
Geysers churn round the all-feeding world tree
The heat of the flames licks to the height-
(*Voluspa* 56)

Well we can't top this performance and so in the next line, a flood cleans all, and, disappearing, allows a new formed Earth to emerge. The *Vafthrudnismal* says that humans survive the fire and the flood, 'life' and 'life spark' are their names, they hide in Hoddmimir's wood and feed on morning dew just as the Israelites fed on manna falling from the skies.

Whether such events were caused by passing comets or planets out of their path is speculation. The histories of Sethos II (c.1215-1210BC) speak of a rotating fire ball called Sekhmet which spread flame in a raging storm.[2]

Temple inscriptions from Ugarit-Ras-Shamra tell of the star 'Anat' which 'fell from the skies and murdered the people of Syria' sometime in the thirteenth century BC. The civilization of the Hittites in Turkey disappeared at the same time, as did the Greek culture that used to write in 'Linear-B' script.

The big catastrophe is dated around 1300BC by Spanuth, whose researches on the Atlantis myth are well worth studying and around 1500BC by Velikovsky, who used another time scale. Another more minor one seems to have taken place c.50 years later and another one, according to Velikovsky happened c.800BC, after which many new cultures seem to appear or re-organize themselves. Perhaps the Celts alluded to these cataclysms when they told Alexander they would fear nothing, except that heaven

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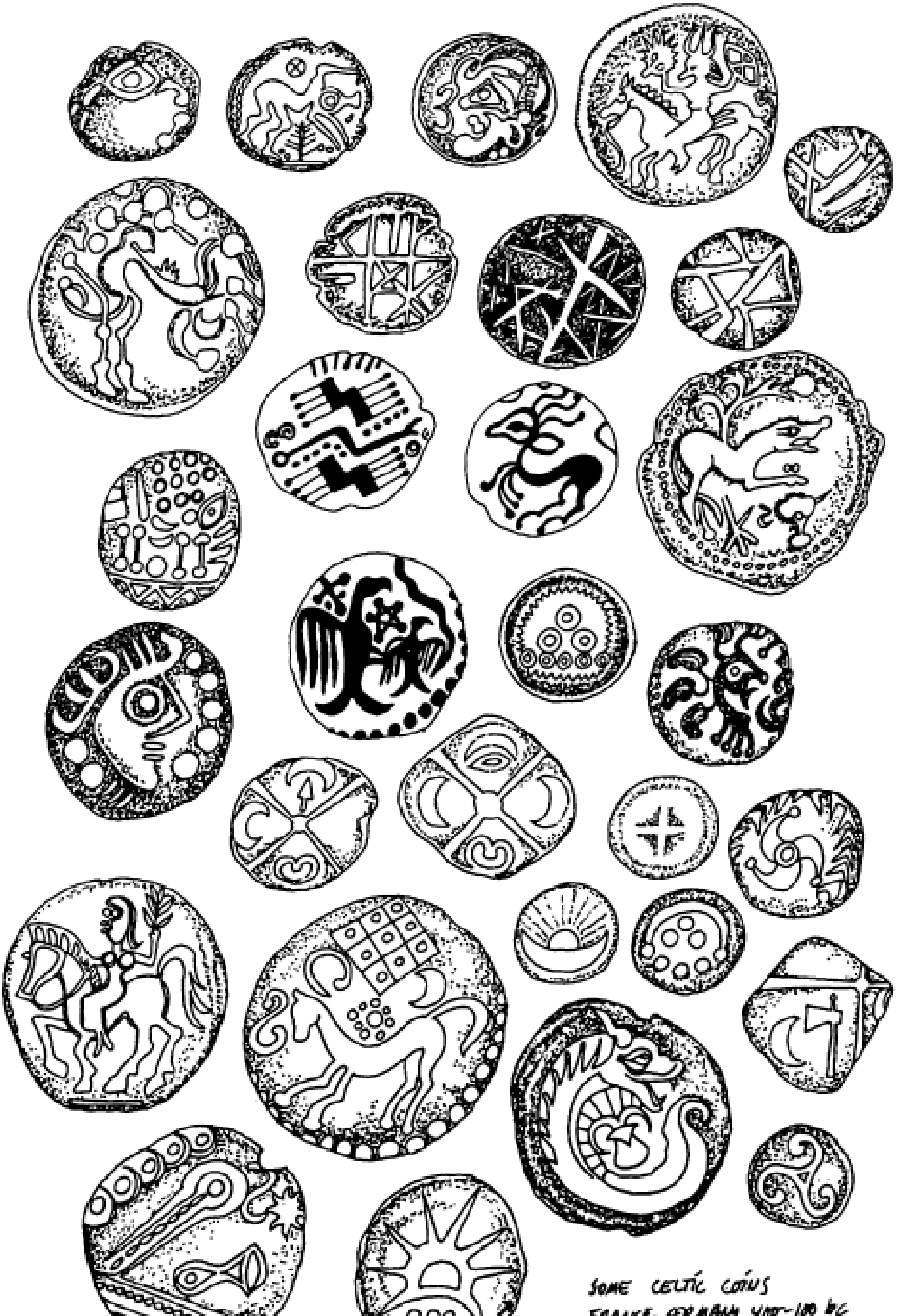
[2] Breasted, *Religions of Ancient Egypt* vol.III



SOME CELTIC COINS
FRANCE, GERMANY, 400-100 BC

might fall on them.

After these real or imaginary catastrophes, a number of modern cultures developed in Europe. One of them is the Celtic. The Celts being also known as Celtoi, Gauls, Gaels, or Galatians. History is uncertain of their origins. After the period of the mysterious 'Urn-field culture', which left behind a legacy of Burial urns, the distinct Celtic culture appears out of the unknown, starting around 700 BC. The earliest known Celtic settlements are near Hallstatt (Austria), north of the Alps, east of the Rhine, and close to the springs of the Danube. They named the river after one of the oldest Indo-European deities, who is also called Dana, Donna, Dunia, Tana, Tanith, Athena, Diana, Jana, Anna, Anya, Iduna, Tianna, Don or Kerridwen (Kerr-Idwen).

The north Italian name of Aradia goes back to her, and to the old Celtic bear goddess Artia, just like the Bretonic St. Anna (who is venerated as the mother of Maria) and the Welsh Rhiannon and the Nordic Nanna (Blossom) and the Sumerian Inanna. As any friend of our lady knows, there is a mutual core to the belief, no matter how different the masks she wears in different countries. Her male counterpart in Celtic mythology was the dual god of height and depth known as Beli to the Welsh, Belenus to continental Celts, the Irish Balor or Bile of the evil eye, Pwyll of the *Mabinogi*, Belatucador of the Latinized belief or the Nordic Baldur. These deities all have to do with the theme of 'heaven and the underworld' and show that the supposed differences in Indo-European belief are far smaller than some would have it. Even the Phoenicians have a Baal as consort to their Tanith, and few scholars have bothered to wonder where these near-eastern sailors could have come upon these deities.

We should not consider the Celts as a single people. There was never a centralized government among the Celts, who consisted of dozens of hostile tribes. Each tribe had its own deities - more than 400 of them are known, most of them only by name. They coined their own currency (an art they learned from the Greeks) and lived in a perpetual feud with their neighbours. Often enough the young men proved their valor by head-hunting, the resulting trophies were honoured and highly valued. Caesar gives an impressive account of the Celtic priesthood, the Druids, which he describes as a caste.

In Caesar's account you will find the frequently quoted tale of gruesome Druids practicing human sacrifice in a variety of ways. This tale has been called Roman propaganda, to excuse the ruthless massacres inflicted on the Celtic priesthood, for instance the raid on a Druid sanctuary described in Tacitus *Agricola*. Some idealistic scholars go so far as to invent a complicated procedure more reminiscent of Hollywood than reality. Maybe all those victims weren't really burned, they hypothesize a purely symbolic rite. No doubt there was a secret passage leading to a safe place underneath the bon fire, so that the victims could emerge reborn after the burning. Well, this sort of symbolic enactment may be charming for our civilized and sophisticated days. However to the Celts, death was a reality and they told Julius Caesar that their tribes were the progeny of the gods of death. A sacrifice was meant to be real, and after all, what is the cost of a life in a ritual that guaranteed the survival of the tribe?

For bigger sacrifices, slaves and criminals could be offered to the gods. Yet there was another sort of sacrifice, which was of a more voluntary nature. We can be fairly certain of the Druids place in society. The Druids were a caste, one of three castes of Celtic society (warriors, priests and peasants) and the only one that was free from taxes and warfare. But they had other graver responsibilities. In many myths and folk tales there is a common account of people drawing lots out of a bag, or eating a cake which contained a plum stone. The Lindow man, is a preserved corpse of a young Celt, found in a swamp near Manchester. He was probably a Druid. This can be deduced from the lack of scars that would mark a warrior's body or the callouses of the peasant. This Druid drew the short straw, so to speak. A cake, burned black, was founded undigested in his stomach. He was simultaneous strangled, clubbed and stabbed in the throat. Later the naked corpse was thrown into the swamp. For further details on the triple form of death see Tolstoy's study of the Merlin mythos.[3]

The Druids, at least those of the later periods, were a rather bloodthirsty order, their society a pure theocracy. We might remember such incidents when we hear certain witches prattle about the so called 'wisdom of the ancients.' Other witches tend to make a great fuss about the supposed differences in the 'Celtic' and 'German' traditions. It is our twentieth century viewpoint that makes this difference, and treats groups of tribes as if they were single nations. The Romans could not find a real difference between them. Both groups were tall and tended to have fair or reddish hair. Both had plenty of internal feuds, spoke closely related Indo-European languages, had curious ideas on warfare involving chiefs who fought in the front line and warriors who undressed for battle, who painted their bodies, plastered their hair and chanted themselves into a fighting rage. Ultimately the Romans solved this problem by saying that every tribe east of the Rhine is German while every tribe west of it is Celtic. Although this was not true it was at least easy to understand.

Apparently the German tribes came from the same source as the Celtic tribes, but appeared later in our history sources. Kimmerians and Teutons developed in the north of Germany, in Denmark, at the North Sea and the Baltic. They came into contact with the Celts of middle and southern Germany, producing a mixed culture and first met the Romans c.180 BC near the Alps. They had migrated across Europe searching for country to settle on, due to colder weather and ruined harvests. To this day scholars are debating which tribe belongs to one group of migrants and which to the other. The Romans created the name 'German', by adapting the name of a single tribe, the Tungerer-men, and inflicting it on everybody. Some tribes, which have hitherto been classed as 'German', namely the Cimmerians and the Teutonas, are considered Celtic by many nowadays, indeed the word 'Teuton' goes back to the Celtic 'Tuatha', meaning 'the people of the tribes'.

There are some differences between Celts and Germans, which come mainly from the fact that more Celtic people of Austria, southern Germany, France and Czech liked to live in or near big walled towns, whilst the more German tribes spread loosely over the country, living in tiny clusters of villages. The German tribes, as far as is known, had no mutual caste of priests as the Celts had.

The American Red Indians were destroyed and corrupted just like the German tribes were, by the superior might of an industrial nation. To the tribes, honour was essential. Unlike Roman officers, the chiefs were not free to break their vows as it suited them. They were naive, so naive that it frequently surprised the Roman historians for whom treachery, espionage and false treaties were a matter of course.

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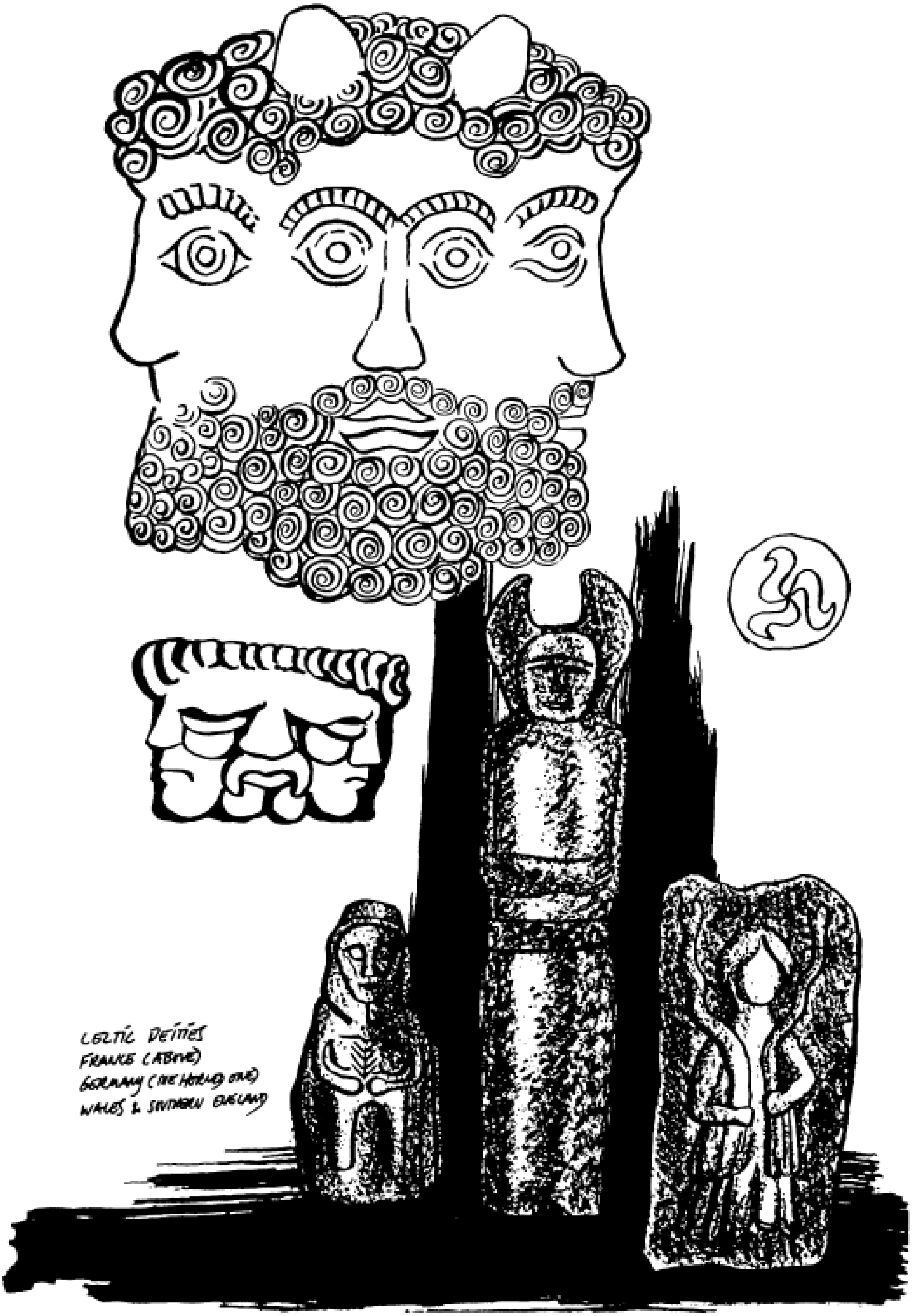
[3] *The Quest for Merlin* 1985



CELTIC DEITIES
FRANCE (ABOVE)
GERMANY (THE HORNED ONE)
WALES & SOUTHERN ENGLAND

For more than a century the tribes encountered disaster, until they had become sufficiently corrupt to deal with the Romans on equal terms. In the process they had abolished women's right to vote, the right of the people to choose their leaders by election and the duty of the leader to fight in the front line. The German strategist who caused most damage to the Romans, the celebrated Armin or Hermann, was a high ranking Roman officer who had been educated in Rome and who brought about the massacre of three Roman legions by betraying them.

It is equally clear that religion also went downhill. To the simple Cimmerian and Teutonic people who arrived at the Alps in their cattle wagons, looking for land to grow grain on, religion was a personal matter. Their belief was suited to migration, to the cattle that was their source of life, to the stars above their head, to the fire in their care, and to the double axe they had for policy. The late Germanic priesthood, as in the infamous temple of Uppsala, or after the famous battle of Teutoburger forest, slaughtered hundreds of prisoners of war by hanging them into trees as a gift to Wodan, or Odin, as god of the warriors.

In the *Edda*, we are told of the travelling Aesir and of the joyous Vanir who lived in the country the Aesir came to. Eventually, after a violent war, the two tribes decided to hold peace and to exchange hostages. The Aesir sent Honir while the Vanir sent Njord. Then the Vanir taught the Aesir the magick of the land. This tale has seen plenty of scholarly interpretation. Some say that the Vanir, known for their fertility deities Njord (who was originally the goddess Nerthus or Nehallenia, Queen of the oceans) and her/his children Frey and Freya (who correspond to the horned one and the scarlet woman), were possibly symbols for deities of the megalith religion; while the aggressive Aesir correspond to the gods of the Indo-European tribes. Indeed there are some indications that the Vanir came from a matricentristic society, as is hinted at in *Lokasenna* (verse 34), and by the generous attitude of Freya (which means the beloved).

Frey and Freya carry in their names the word roots for such terms as freedom, or the German *Freude* (joy) and *Frieden* which means peace. Others say that the legend comes from the time when the Saxon tribes, having made Wotan a god of war, invaded Scandinavia. There (w)odin soon replaced the popular Frey as a chief deity.

It is interesting how much certain Celtic and German gods resemble each other. The similarity of Iduna and the Celtic Dana has already been mentioned. Another prominent case is the connection of the common Germanic Wodan with the Welsh Gwydion, with Mannawyddan of the *Mabinogi* and the Irish *Mannannnan*. As John Matthews points out[4], the Welsh 'Gwydd' means tree, while 'Gwyddon' means magicians and 'Gwyddor' is science.

Wodan, by the way, is not quite identical with the Norse Odin. Odin developed out of Wodan, when the cult was brought to Scandinavia by conquering tribes, and in the process the 'w' was lost and the original god of storm and wildness was installed as a patriarchal chief deity. The elder version, Wodan, could appear in either sex, as is hinted at by Loki in the *Lokasenna* (vs. 23-25), and the same goes for blood brother Loki, who should have known better than to insult the other with it. Wodan, in the old version, is a god of rage and ecstasy, a shamans deity, as can still be seen in his name: OHG Wuot = insane, goth wôds = angry, obsessed, OENG wôd, OICE ôdr = raving, OENG wod = sound, voice, poetry, OICE ôdr = poetry.

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[4] Mathews, John, *Taliesin: Shamanism and the Bardic Mysteries of Britain and Ireland* (Aquarian Press 1991)

The modern German 'wut' means rage, wrath, but in the old days the word used to be applied for madness and ecstasy. As the god of the howling storm, wild Woide rides over the fields, leading the 'wild hunt' on a jolly chase that is certainly much more fun than being the serene chief god in Valhalla. Odin's wife, Frigg, can also be found in the Celtic systems. Here she appears as Brigg, Brigit or Bride, the 'F' and 'B' sounds having been changed.

Frigg is another aspect of Freya ('the dear one'), but once Odin was installed as a serious patriarch in the courts of Scandinavia and Iceland, there was no way that his wife could continue of Freya does, who is loving and open to all. Loki is another wonderful example. This figure of a clown and trickster, who neatly balances the priestly function of Wodan, appears as a solar figure in the Celtic pantheon. We meet him as Lug on the mainland, and as Lugh Lamh Fada (light of the long hand) in Ireland. In the *Mabinogi* he is Llew Llaw Gyffes, (the Lion of certain aim), while in the *Edda* his function is that of clown, trickster and destroyer. The old High German: loug, louc, lauc, lauga = fire, flame, light, while lugin = to lie. For some incredible reason the Christian creed made Lucifer out of him. If you listen quite closely you can hear him insisting on his innocence right now, between smug sniggers. You don't have to believe this; he does not believe in your innocence either.

With the repeated conquest, and re-conquest of central Europe by the Roman forces, much of the original nature religion went down the drain. The Romans were tolerant enough to allow people to believe freely, they only saw to it that the priesthood was exterminated. This reduced much of the religion to local customs. Now it is a curious fact that the Romans were always hungry for new cults to make up for their own lack of culture. This made the legions a meeting place for dozens of deities. There exists a stelae for instance, which tells us that a certain officer wished to thank the 'Mercurius Germanicus', i.e. Wodan, for victory against some German tribes. A Roman praying to a German god? Stranger things have been known. Near the place where I write these lines was the old Roman frontier town Nida, the last civilized place to have a good bath south of the border. In Nida (named after the river, which had its name from Nydd, or Nodens), which is nowadays part of Frankfurt, the remnants of the following religions have been found, all of which were popular with the legions: Juppiter, Mars, Candida, Kybele, Mercurius, Mercurius Germanicus, Hercules and Fortuna (patron deities of the XXII legion), Astarte, Mithras, Isis, Nodens, Serapis and Epona. Of course the worship of these 'accepted and assimilated' deities was a far cry from their original context. The Isis cult, for instance, looked probably much like a brothel.

A little north of here lie the ringwall systems of the Taunus mountains. They were the religious centre of the Chattian tribe, which was violently destroyed in its sanctuary by Domitian Caesar in the first century. It took 25,000 soldiers, as many as Julius Caesar needed to conquer Gaul, to destroy the Chattian resistance and to slaughter those who had fled to their holy mountain. The Romans knew better than to leave an important religious site in the hands of a rebellious tribe. An aspect of Pagan faith that prospered under Roman rule is the Celtic veneration of holy springs and wells. In pre-Roman times, people used to pilgrimage to a sacred well, 'to take the water'. Under Roman rule, many of these wells were decorated with stones showing three goddesses, the 'matrona' and became centres of little villages full of shrines and hotels.

After the Roman empire began to crumble, there was very little left of the original pagan religion. Next the Huns entered the scene, occupying all land east of the Rhine with the help of their Gothic vassals. The Goths were a south German tribe who had settled in southern Russia prior to making friends with the Huns. They remained pagans, if of a rather blood thirsty variety, while west of the Rhine the Franks and Allemannes were soon introducing Christian ideas.

Around 600 the first missionaries, most of them Irish and British, began their activities on the continent. It may seem surprising that their zealous conduct did not earn them a sword on the head and a ticket to paradise straight away. These people earnestly believed that they were doing God's work when they baptized holy wells, destroyed cult places, erected monasteries in sacred groves and cut down the old Donar thunder-oaks. Many a megalithic stone sanctuary was destroyed so that a church could be built out of the rocks and strangely enough, the simple people who had done without a real religion for long enough, offered very little resistance.

Later on, when the power of the state was behind the church, things got considerably more lively. Often enough pagans were sedated with drink or beaten till unconscious. Then a priest would bless and baptize them and when they woke up they were given the choice of being Christians or dying straight away. When Charlemagne had conquered the Saxons in 804, the last of Pagan culture had disappeared in central Europe. Any amount of pagan town names got changed, especially those which had Wodan in them - Karl himself modestly offering his own name as a replacement. However whilst he was known as 'Saxonsbutcher' and crushed Pagan believe in order to legitimize his conquests, his son Ludwig the Pious began a 'witch hunt', with the intention of exterminating all Pagan ideas, customs and forms of worship.

Some scholars estimate that around 11 million witches were killed in the name of Christ. Other are more conservative in their estimates, depending upon the definition of 'witch' or 'heathen'. To this day the churches have not admitted to any of these public blood sacrifices. This number includes all sorts of pagans, heretics, healers, insane persons, astrologers, alchemists, free thinkers, outsiders, gypsies, and especially those whose property was of interest to church and king. It also includes any amount of innocent bystanders who got accused in the general hysteria. Quite often, church and King used to split up the entire property of the accused, which made anyone in society, even the wealthy, likely targets for the charge of witchcraft.

What happened to Pagan belief?

Without a regular religion, much of the old belief got heavily distorted. The peasants remember a lot of the old ways in numerous customs. Folk customs such as the midsummer fire or the green man (a child dressed in birch twigs) who brings spring into town. Fairy tales such as those collected by the Grimm brothers. Did you know that the Frau Holle of the tale was originally the dark goddess Helja of the underworld? Even the church could not abolish the Pagan festival of Easter, named after the spring goddess Ostara/Oestre, whose symbols are the birch twig, the hare and the egg of fertility. It may have been Ostara who led Tacitus to the belief that the Germans worship Isis. Isis, as you should know, is a Greek name for an Egyptian goddess whose name was probably pronounced 'Ast'.

Feasting, with or without a drunken orgy, was an important aspect of Pagan lifestyle. Modern Pagans like to celebrate eight seasonal festivals, like the eight legs of Odin's horse, to keep them in tune with the yearly cycle of changes. Four of these festivals refer directly to the relation of day and night: These are the feasts of the solstices in midsummer and midwinter and the equinoxes of spring and autumn.

Another four feasts take place between these times, these being the beginning of winter, and the new year, around the first of November. The light and hearth rites of early February when winter is at its coldest; the celebration of the reborn green wood in May and the harvest festival early in August, when Lugh's heat is over the land.

These four rites which were commonly found in some Celtic countries derive their meaning from the agricultural year. Their dates do not arise from the motion of the sun or the length of the day, but refer to events in rural life. The new year, for instance was celebrated when winter came, when the wild hunt lead by Wodan, Odin, Gwynn-ap-nudd or Arthur roared on the storm winds, stripping the branches, bending the trees, clearing the forest for the fall of snow. In a sense, the new year began when the work of the old year was done, when all stocks were prepared, all harvest, fruits, berries and foodstuffs dried and people were ready to face the dark season. Or let us consider the May festival, which began the warm season. Though some modern Pagans insist that this feast was celebrated on the night before the first of May, there are a good many rural places where the 'May-tree' isn't erected until the forest has turned green, even if this delays the rite till June. The same consideration applies to the harvest festival, which some claim was on the first of August, while others postulate was performed on the nearest full moon. Obviously, harvest time varies from year to year, depending on the weather. Sometimes the last corn is cut in July, in other years August and often the harvest itself is delayed when a couple of rainy days interrupt the work. Traditionally the harvest festival began when the last grains cut were worked into a corn-dolly and carried home for the celebration. Such a corn spirit was considered a fierce entity, who had to be flattered, placated and fed, so that the corn would be reborn in the next year. It is unlikely that any Pagan peasant would have cut the harvest only to wait with the corn-king rituals for some fixed date, as such delays were believed to be dangerous. The Christian church assimilated quite a few Pagan festivals and fixed them to specific dates, which may accord more with modern thinking. It is difficult to find a single ancient European culture that celebrated all eight of them. Though the equinoxes were undoubtedly of astronomical significance to the priesthood, there were next to no popular rites connected with them in northern Europe. In most Celtic and German mythology the equinoxes are completely missing. Equally diffuse is the actual celebration of the Germanic winter festivals. Nordic literature agrees on an average three winter feasts, one beginning, one in the middle and one at the end of winter. These were great feasts, with lots of guests from all over the territory. Whilst the feasts in the warm season were much smaller as people were generally too busy in summer to travel or drink for days on end. One of these winter feasts was Yule, a word nowadays used for the winter solstice. In the various sagas, Yule could refer to any of these winter feasts, nor is it clear which of the three was the greatest. Depending on wealth, some nobles feasted for weeks while others could only afford a swift three day carousal followed by a week of headache.

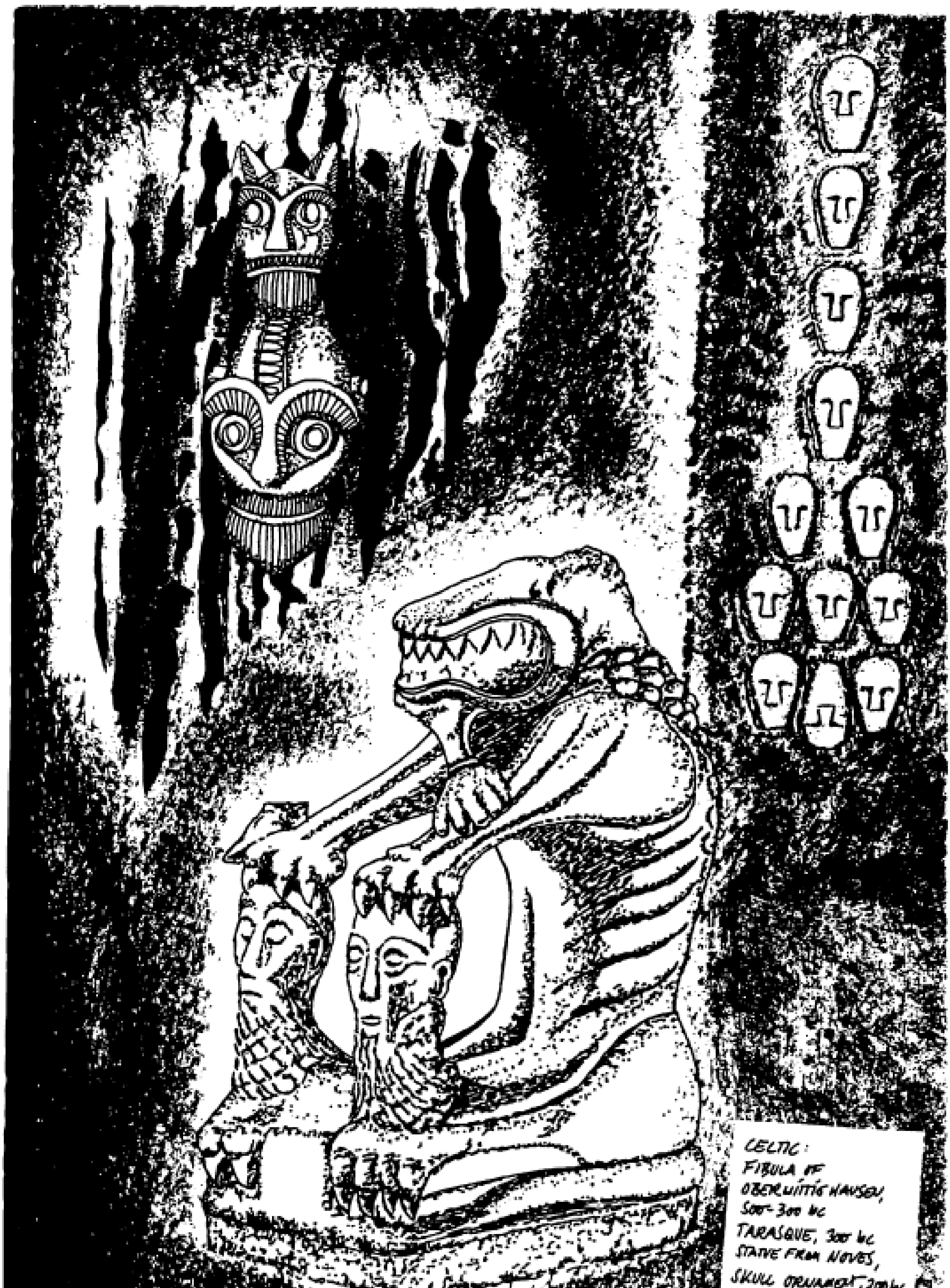
In Scandinavia, the distinct rituals of the May tree, celebrating fresh green, and the midsummer celebration got mixed up. This is hardly surprising as in these countries spring and summer are very close together. The summer solstice was often a minor feast in Viking society, as in summer so many of the tribe were abroad to trade or plunder. As an interesting detail, I would like to mention that to most Pagans, the day ends with sunset, so that the new day starts with the night, meaning with time and occasion for celebration. In the same way the new year starts with winter and heavy feasting, before spring and the season of work. It seems that the Celtic/Germanic mind liked to start the new day with feasting all evening, followed by good sleep and a little work. Compare this to the Roman year, which started in March, or the day-rhythm of our culture. Nowadays the day starts in the morning, with work, after which we may enjoy a little feasting (after dark), the whole thing ending in sleepy oblivion at night. 'First work, then play' is a modern idea and one the heathens of the old days would have considered mighty strange.

The season between the winter solstice (St Thomas) and the 6th January (day of the three kings) was known as the time of the wild hunt in the Catholic year, while in the old belief the wild hunt could storm all winter through. During this time the yearly cycle is open and all the repressed spirits of the old times are free to take their pleasure on earth. All over Europe, peasants and firm Catholics mark their home and stable doors with a chalk inscription which runs:

+ 19 + C + M + B + 93 +

Invoking the new year and the three kings to keep the wild hunt out. In this season between the years, Wodan and the Valkyries roar through the night, followed by the legions of the dead, the spirits of chaos and ghosts of the unborn. Beasts are known to talk, elves reveal themselves to lonely drunkards, cattle go mad, milk goes sour, women conceive unexpected children, ancestors rise from their graves and strange hunters can be seen in forests, dancing merrily on cloven feet. In short, everyone has a much needed wonderful time. Blessings to the Kings from under the hill!

I hope that I have made it clear that all magical traditions of ancient Europe influenced each other, and that with each new aeon the formula of old were adapted to the new world. It is not our job to resurrect some 'genuine old tradition'. There are witches and pagans who search for this fantastic entity, thinking that the old way may offer a safety that they cannot find in modern times. I do not believe that any such tradition exists, nor do I think that it is needed. We are living in a modern world that tries to find ways of keeping peace and escaping ecological catastrophe. The solutions of old times are not adequate to this task. We have to find new solutions that suit the new aeon. let us dance with the flow, keeping balance in steady flight.



CELTIC:
FIBULA OF
OBERWITTIG HAUSEN,
500-300 bc
TARASQUE, 300 bc
STATUE FROM NOVES,
SKULL ORNAMENT, 200 bc
TEMPLE OF ENTREMONT.

7

Runes and Fascism

This chapter intends to give some insight into the use and abuse of Celtic and German nature religion during this century. It is an important topic, as many occultists consider the runes to be tainted by their application by the Nazis. It is also a rather complicated topic, as most of the 'facts' about the esoteric aspects of the Third Reich cannot be proven. There are rumours, gossip and of course there are plenty of stories of people who supposedly talked too much and then disappeared.

As a non Nazi, I have no access to those circles which may or may not be informed on the occult side of National Socialism. Indeed, if you asked anybody on the street about it, you would notice that very few people in Germany are aware of the esoteric dogma of the Nazis. Those who remember the war would tell you that the school kids had to read about German/Icelandic mythology, that there were rune signs on certain uniforms and flags and that children had to celebrate some of the old pagan festivals. Probably you would also be told that there was nothing esoteric to the whole affair, just a few old customs resurrected by the state. If you asked about runes you would probably get a shrug for an answer, perhaps a bit of Wagnerian mythology, and an uneasy 'well, this is all Nazi stuff, isn't it?' To most of those who remember the war, these memories are pretty unpleasant and much rather forgotten. It is no coincidence that most books which deal with esoteric Nazi gnosis, such as *Hitler's Secret Science* or the works of Pauwels and Bergier, were written outside of Germany.

How much magick was there in Nazi Germany?

A recent book by reverend Haack (employed by the Catholic Church to investigate any new religion or cult) gives some interesting insights. Haack lists some prominent members of the Thule Society. This group was a nationalistic order which financed the rise of the National Democratic Party and supported its leaders with cash, dogma and a certain amount of magical training. They educated the non-entity Hitler, supplied a secret doctrine and helped rig the elections in favour of the Nazis. Thule members were, among others; Adolf Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the Reich; Rudolf Hess, Deputy Führer; Hermann Göring, Reich Marshall; Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS and Reich Marshall; Alfred Rosenberg Reich Minister; Hans Frank, National Socialist Reich Leader and Governor General of Poland; Julius Streicher, SA leader; Professor Karl Haushofer, Major General, ret.

Not all of these people were active occultists, as the Thule Society was not only an esoteric order but also a political club. The Thule Society's head was Freiherr Rudolf Von Sebottendorf, author of a book on Turkish Freemasonry which taught certain hand gestures plus concentration exercises. Two famous occultists, Guido Von List and Jörg Lanz Von Liebenfeld were its secret masters.

How much did these people practice Magick?

Some sources see the entire Nazi movement as a case of black magick, while others express the opinion that most Thule members were simply superstitious and power hungry. If we look at the historical development we find that the Thule Society was a somewhat nutty right wing organization prior to the Nazi's rise to power. These people were busy recreating a 'national identity' by blending Icelandic sagas with Wagner operas, trying to resurrect the 'original German' who would have been out of place anywhere except in Bayreuth. Such movements existed in most north European countries. At the same time France invented a pure Gallic race, while Britain indulged in a Celtic sentimentality, and of course everybody pretended that their own ancestors came from a pure and ideal race which had nothing to do with the rest of Europe. These 'Celtic', 'Gallic' and 'Germanic' movements were typified by blind romanticism, heroic ideals, naivete and the overwhelming need to be not just special but superior.

When the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, the Thule Society supplied the necessary dogma to create a state religion. This religion was developed gradually. As most of the older people were of Christian faith, the indoctrination was focused largely on children, with the long-term perspective of abolishing Christianity entirely. The substance of this new religion came from a curious mixture of Eddic legends, Grimm's fairy tales, Wagner's operas, old country customs, Arthurian myths plus a lot of material which the SS expedition under Karl Haushofer brought back from Tibet. Tibet, or rather *Schampulah*, was considered as the home country of the Aryan race. Consequently several SS expeditions were sent out to climb mountains, meet the Dalai Lama, search for the entrance to the centre of the earth and to bring back esoteric symbols, such as the Swastika. They also invited a number of Tibetan monks (rumours vary between 200 and 2000) who were found, dead by poison, when the American army entered Berlin.

Meanwhile the Thule Society worked hard on the acquisition of 'secret wisdom.' The SS raided all occult orders which would not cooperate with the Nazis. The head of the Fraternitas Saturni, Fr. Gregorius, was asked to undertake 'scientific' work to create a perfume to be used for the manipulation of large groups of people. Gregorius refused, and fled. Others, the unlucky ones, ended their days in concentration camps.

There were a number of highly bizarre projects, which are mentioned by Pauwels and Bergier, such as the search for the hollow earth, the 'world-ice' thesis and so on. Some claim that the SS also sent a couple of thousand soldiers to Brazil, where, according to rumours, they are to this day, living deep in the jungle in mystical ruined cities of elder races, killing all who are unlucky enough to stumble upon them. As with all stories on the Third Reich, mythology and superstition obscure the picture. Fanatics are not made with facts but fantasy, especially when the two cannot be kept apart.

What about the runes?

Though the Old English rune poem was known in Germany (one of the Grimm brothers wrote a little book on it) this material was for some reason ignored. Guido Von List, however, popularized a rune system of eighteen runes which he received, complete with new names, during a time when he was blind for reasons unspecified. Von List's rune system was apparently the basis on which so many other reactionary rune meddlers built their curious structures. Von List published his new and improved rune row and gave some 'meditation aphorisms' for each sign. Here are some samples. They say more about the Nazi way of thinking in terms of struggle, control and dominance, than the runes.

ᛋ : the creative spirit must be victorious!
ᚴ : respect the ancient fire!
ᛁ : Through the unquestioning consciousness of your own mental might can the waves be controlled, made frozen and be hardened into ice. Not only waves (or will alone) but all life is obedient to the masterful will!
ᛡ embrace all in yourself and you will rule all!
ᚠ : your blood is your greatest treasure!
ᚱ : I am my rod (right), this right is inviolable, thus I am inviolable, as I am my right!
Interpretations of other rune experts of the period are by no means easier to digest:
ᛚ :through pain, failure, need, temptation and suffering did I realize the true life! (Kummer)
ᛁ: I will self-consciously experience all, self-consciously do all, self-consciously be my own! (Marby)
ᚱ : I am my own right and knight! (Kummer)
One of my favourite aphorisms is given by Karl Spiesberger in his *Runenmagie* (where all of these quotation come from). Behold and tremble!
ᛦ : the deluding insanity of matter shatters before the awakened one! Strength triumphs over the lust of the senses! O holy might of the runes! Redeem me from the root demon of women's nature! Woman, be human!

It seems hardly surprising that this sort of barely translatable garbage leads to highly eccentric systems of mystical insight. The following attribution of runes, gods, god homes and old month names to the signs of the zodiac was created by the Guido Von List Society during the war. It is still used and circulated by the 'Armanenorder', who continue the Von List tradition to this day.

Runes	**Home**	**Gods**	**Old month names**	**Zodiac**
ᛝᛁ	Gladsheim	Ziu-Tyr, Ostara, Magni	Ostermond	♈
ᚴᚠ	Alfheim	Freya, Gerda, Nerthe Freyr-Fro	Wonnemond	♉
ᛚ ᛋ	Ydalir	Bragi, Idun	Brachet	♊
ᛞᛗᛊ	Sökkwabek	Saga, Urd, Nanna Wilbert, Loki, Hodur	Heuert	♋
ᛗᚼᛅ ᚨ	Breidablick	Baldur, Sif, Werdandi	Ernting	♌
ᛈ ᚢ	Volkwang	Frigga, Hertha, Honir, Skuld.	Scheiding	♍
ᚱ ᛤ	Glitnir	Forsetti, Gefion.	Gilbhart	♎
ᛊᛟ	Walhall	Holle, Odin-Wodan.	Neblung	♏
ᛰ ᚦ	Trudheim	Donar-Thor, 3 Norns	Julmond	♐
ᛒ ᚾ	Thrymheim	Skadi, Widar, Uller...	Hartung.	♑
ᚹ ᛉ	Himminbjorg	Heimdall, 13 Valkyries	Hornung.	♒
ᛏ ᛦ	Noatun	Eir, Hel, Ran, Njord.	Lenzing.	♓

If this table proves anything at all it is the hopeless confusion of the Nazi gnosis. What the Nazis really believed is a riddle that cannot be unveiled. As in most old style orders, there were different instructions for different grades in the hierarchy.

Every one of those leading Nazis was busy with intrigue, trying to gather more power, influence, secrets, and when the war turned out against them (as the Tibetan state oracle and Hitler's personal astrologer are supposed to have predicted), a goodly dose of paranoia entered the picture. Himmler, so it is claimed, is said to have sent out an SS research team to find the Holy Grail, while others were keen to acquire the magical jewelry and weapons of escaped magicians, thinking the ownership of such tools would give them the power to work miracles.

The runes and the various popular symbols were meant to control the masses. The Nazis were quite aware that the release of emotional energy could be associated with specific symbols, and that these symbols could subsequently be used to trigger the desired emotional response at will. This sort of thing is used by most states, as any mage should know. However, I do not think that the emotional hysteria the Nazis evoked had any lasting effect on the runes. The runes, after all, have considerable power and consciousness that comes not only from cultural conditioning but also from their deep-rooted similarity to our mind structures. The Nazis, who ignored these eldritch connections, thought that they could inflict an entirely new and artificial meaning on these symbols, and expected the system to function as they had made it. As history shows, it did not work out. Had they invented new symbolism they might have conceivably 'charged it' the way they intended to. The way it was, they tried to re-name and control a phenomena they did not understand.

To an extent the association of rune symbols with emotional energy did function. If you ask the man or woman on the street what they remember about the runes, you will find these symbols associated mostly with shame and guilt.

The teachings of Nazi religion did not disappear at the end of the war. Some of the esoteric research materials were supposedly collected by special units of the American and Russian forces, and were never heard of again. What remained were dozens of small, fanatic groups. Such groups exist to this day. Haack mentions several of them in his work *Wotans Wiederkehr*. They share a mutual belief in the divine mission of Adolf Hitler, in racial purity and in a number of religious practices. Many of these groups consist almost entirely of idealistic young hot-heads, barely controlled by the older generation. Such groups are known to play war with genuine weapons, as they all eagerly await the day when the Russians, the Jews, the Third World Nations and all sorts of 'sub-human' races come to take their sacred fatherland away.

One of them is called the 'Gylfi-Youths', named after the legendary King Gylfi whom you may find in Snorri's prose *Edda*. Gylfi youths practice pagan nature festivals, rune divination (on the basis of the eighteen rune system) and have a mantra which they are supposed to repeat daily: 'Omi-Odin, Omi-Odin, Omi-Odin, Har, Here, Here, Har.' Gylfi dogma says:

> 'Pray to Gylfi for strength of faith, pray to Hermann for the purity of Germania, pray to Adolf for the unity of Deutschland.'

In a fantastic attempt to become completely isolated, the Gylfi movement has even developed its own language, composed of old High German, Old Icelandic and some completely artificial words. All this is done to cleanse the speech of the true Aryan from the 'evil' influence of the Latin tongue.

More serious work is done by the Armanen order. From what one hears, the Armanen have recently reorganized and claim to be apolitical. The old Nazis, they say, have left the order. I have no idea whether this claim is true. The old Armen order, as it existed till three or four years ago, was definitely nationalistic. They used to celebrate nature rituals at old historic sites, which was a lengthy and complicated procedure involving many speeches, prayer to the Icelandic gods and to Adolf (who is supposed to feast at Odin's right in Valhalla), slow and pompous circle dances, rune divination, rune postures, ritual gestures plus sacrifices to the elements of earth, water and fire. Air is missing in their program. Perhaps they simply did not feel comfortable with it. In their old form the Armanen, who developed out of the Guido Von List Society, were keen on breeding a pure, Aryan super race, which was supposed to leave this planet in the next 2,000 years and good riddance! Their old self description ran as follows: 'The Armanen order fights for the true realization of the divine world order on the foundation of the old Aryan understanding of God as it is revealed in the hereditary forms of religion and cult in the ancient German myths of the gods.' The bloated style of the original is even worse. Whether these lines are still acceptable to the new and reformed Armanen order I do not know.

Another interesting development can be observed in the various forms of Odinism. From what I hear some of them seem to lean strongly towards 'white superiority.' The 'Odinist Hof' for instance, has pointed out that 'Odinists also believe in caste. . . the Indian code of Manu was issued forbidding marriage between different castes. This is an Odinistic concept.' (English *Odinist Hof Review* number 9, 29, 2, 22, 34 re.) Recently a group of Odinists tried to boycott a performance of Wagner's *Ring* at an Oxford theatre because it dared to cast a black singer as 'Wotan', an idea which the Odinists considered 'religious sacrilege.' In the old Pagan days, any person able to sing would have been thought blessed by Odin/Wodan, who is the god of speech and song, no matter the skin colour. It should be noted that a good many Odinist groups, even nonracist ones, habitually use an 'Eddic' vocabulary full of aggressive metaphors. Life, they consider, is battle and war and humans are free as long as they are willing to fight. Only heroes. who have died fighting, will go to Valhalla, so they believe - an item of Icelandic mythology out of touch with the rest of Europe, where people were not quite as extreme. It is moot point how many of these martial metaphors are still useful in modern society. Where Icelandic heroes relied on a stout sword and a supporting clan, modern people rely on manners, law and the state. Indeed it seems that the more magicians describe themselves as 'warriors' the more troublesome does their life become. Warriors imply war, enemies, aggression, life and death struggle - none of which is beneficial for a peaceful and productive existence. Moreover, people who play the warrior game are in real danger of taking themselves too seriously and mind you, when something become serious, you are probably doing it wrong.

I hope that there are other forms of Odinists with less narrowminded dogma. In a time when we should, at long last, learn to consider the earth as a single living entity, there should be less emphasis on the supposed differences of colour, creed and nationality.

8

Titles and Names

Now for a look at the people who practised magick and religion in old pre-Christian Europe. The works of Greek and Roman scholars supply a description of their functions and activities. But these authors should be taken with a large pinch of salt: many of them were more interested in a lively propaganda story than a realistic account. However biased these tales may be, they are pretty much all that there is known of those early Celtic and German forms of religion.

In pre-Christian northern Europe, the various tribes were pantheistic. As everybody knew, there were lots of gods, goddesses, spirits, clan totems, and whatnot, most of them with a distinct personality and a specialized function. Each of these spiritual entities had a specific job to do, be it to make thunder, help lovers, bless the harvest or to grant victory. Now these gods often had different names or images, which varied from tribe to tribe. Their functions, however, were universally understood. People prayed to the deities who were important to them; when they had a problem they turned to the deity in charge of that subject, and as there were lots of gods, one could be sure that all aspects of daily life were regulated by one specialist or other.

In these early and tolerant forms of religion, there were mystery and secret lore for each deity. People could participate in the worship of many deities, or be members of several cults, and as the gods of the time were neither elitist, exclusive, nor jealous, everything was fine. Consider the Celtic tribes of Julius Caesar's Gaul. From what we know today, it seems that there were hundreds of deities with distinct names and attributes, many of them completely unknown to us. Though some scholars have tried to work out the 'chief deities' of ancient Gaul, such projects have not been successful, as maybe the tribes were too independent to care much for the god-forms of their neighbours. Indeed it seems that the earlier Celtic and Germanic tribes were not interested in 'chief deities', as all gods were of importance one way or another.

These people were highly religious. Daily life included a lot of ritual customs, such as prayer and offerings, and these were practised by everyone. In Celtic Gaul, the more important ceremonies were conducted by the Druids. Druids, as Caesar tells us, were members of a caste, and enjoyed a number of privileges. Some of the Druids functioned as priests, healers or prophets. Others were judges, diplomats, historians, scholars, singers or simply officials. It seems likely that these Druids, with their secret rites and their lengthy education, had some sort of monopoly on intellectual activities. Many Celtic tribes of the time were organized in a strictly theocratic fashion, meaning that the priests controlled the kings. In such societies - think of ancient Egypt, Sumeria or Tibet - a criminal offence, such as theft, is not seen as an offence against the state, but as a sin against the deities who made the laws. Now an organized priesthood, such as the Druids, is only possible when people live close together, and there is enough wealth to support them. In Gaul, many people lived in walled towns, some of them with more than 20,000 inhabitants, which made it easy for the Druids, and later the Romans, to control the population. Celtic southern Germany had similar cities. In middle and northern Germany, however, religion was a less centralized affair. Many of the German tribes preferred to spread loosely all over the country, rather than cluster in fortified cities. These people enjoyed tiny villages, with lots of distance between neighbours. Under such conditions, a professional caste of priests is highly impractical. Possibly there were some priests who lived near sacred sites, or organized the great ting-feasts on the mountaintops, which had people travelling for days to participate. In everyday rural life, people were often too far from any priest to 'go to church' regularly. As a result, the head of the family assumed a priest-function for the various minor rites of daily life. Of course these people had no regular religious education. Many of the wise women and cunning men of these days acquired their skills from like-minded practitioners living at the fringe of society, or received their knowledge directly and first hand from the gods and ghosts of the wild woods. It logically follows that such people developed inspired, and highly individual, systems of religion. Some of the north Germanic cults had regular priests who travelled across the country. These people often journeyed in big groups, with lots of wagons. Some of these carriages contained images of the gods, or holy objects, while the better part of them was reserved for the money and gifts collected from the population. Often these priests were accompanied by merchants and entertainers, people came to worship, to trade, to feast, and carouse, until the church put a stop to the fun. While in mainland Europe, most of the fun was over by 800, the old religion continued for a while in Scandinavía. The Vikings believed in many of the old gods of Germany, and developed a professional priesthood with strong political influence and lavish temples, wherever there was a wealthy king to support them. In the more rural parts, the priests had to work for a living, and were rich peasants, warriors or traders. In Scandinavia of the Viking periods the original forms of pantheism were somewhat distorted. Such ideas as 'only those who die fighting go to Valhall' were completely unknown on the continent, they are 'modern' ideas meant to motivate warriors into suicidal fighting rages. Similarly the mainland 'Wode' is an important deity, but not a patriarchal 'chief of the gods' as the Scandinavian Odin. That deity changed from a storm god (Wode) to a god of ecstasy and rage (Wodan) to a god of rulers and warriors (Odin), and will change again, attuning to the new aeon, to assume a mask that fits our time. Now you might ask whether these people who worshipped in old northern Europe were 'pagans', or whether they had a common term for themselves. If this was the case, this common name has been lost - though it seems more likely that there never was a common concept, in our modern sense. The idea of a single common German or Celtic religion is a modern one, as in the old days each district had its peculiar rites and attitudes. The Romans did much to suppress the organized priesthood of the countries they occupied, and the Christian church went beyond that. When Charlemagne, with God on his side, united the 'German-Catholic empire' his opponents, many of them believers in older faiths were termed 'pagans' or 'heathens' - city people's words for rustics living in the country. When the last Saxon tribes had been suppressed or massacred, the country became officially Christian. Simultaneously, all adherents of the old faith became 'witches', 'devil worshippers', or worse, and were treated in accordance with old Mosaic law. The 'witch hunt' of the medieval and later periods continued a tradition of religious homicide which began during the Roman occupation.

Now for our terminology. I'll give a brief list of various magical and religious professions and activities, basically titles, functions, and insulting names, such as you may encounter in your research. The idea behind this list isn't so much to supply you with a lot of new and exciting labels to stick to yourself, but to give an idea of the many different practitioners mentioned in old literature. Those who like to call themselves by fancy names should perhaps consider that a title is a crutch to support the ego in times of doubt and worry. If you need a title to do your thing, this merely indicates that you can't do it naturally.

Helrunar, Haljarunae, Hellirunar, describes a person who 'runes' (speaks, sings, whispers) with Hel/Helja, the goddess and realm of the underworld. 'Hell', in its original meaning is the hidden realm, the dark and foggy place where the dead and unborn dwell. Often the term is used with a sinister meaning. The Gothic Bishop Wulfila mentions a group of 'Haljarunae' (feminine form) who were evicted by King Filimer because of their sorceries. Incidentally Filimer was not a Christian but a Pagan king. Others connect the Helrunar with the practice of 'utiseta' = 'to sit outside' (the whole night through) to evoke spirits, raise the dwellers from under the hill or to practise necromancy. In reading this book and exploring the runes, you are raising the dead spirits of a forgotten magick of the past.

Druid. A Druid was a member of the Celtic priesthood. Julius Caesar gives an interesting account of the Druids in the sixth book of *Bellum Gallicum*. The word Druid has several interpretations. Some link it with *duir*, the oak (from *dorw-) and *derwydd* which, according to Robert Graves, is Welsh for 'oak-seer'. *Deru- is the Indo-European root of the word 'Tree' and the closely related ideas 'true' and 'trustworthy'. Others claim that Druid comes from the Celtic roots *dru*, strong, full and *wid*, wisdom, vision, wit. It is a curious thing that the Druids had a tradition that claimed they originated in a mysterious island paradise in the North Sea (Atlantis?), while it is equally obvious that the Celtic people actually came from central Europe. Nowadays Druids are often connected with runes, which is rather absurd as the original Druids are said to have used no writing, and the island Celts themselves wrote Ogham, if they wrote at all.

Erilar, is a name or title that is frequently found in rune inscriptions. Some witches claim that it means 'rune master' whilst scholars say it signifies the 'the Herulian', which is a tribe from northern Germany that used more rune writing than others.

Godhi, Gudja, Gudi, Gydya. These are popular terms in the Gothic language which became fashionable after the Roman occupation. A Godhi is a priest of some cult or religion, who deals with ritual, ceremony, sacrifice and similar offices. The name connects with the word 'god' (K ᚢ ᚦ cuth) which was a title for several deities (Gautr = Odin) before the Christians monopolized it. 'God' can be traced to the Indo-European roots. *Gheue- = to call, invoke (OHG *gud-igaz* and OE *gydig* = possessed, insane, giddy) and **gheu* = to pour, to sacrifice.

Éwart, meanings the eternal law (åwa) guardian and *Eosago* or *Asega* meaning the 'law-speaker'. See also theEhwaz rune for further meaning of this word.

Wicce is the root of 'witch'. Gerald Gardener tried to connect it with 'wit' and 'wisdom', making his version of wicca 'the craft of the wise.' linguistics, more prosaic, traces it back to 'wicked' which means 'crafty, cunning, twisted', and indicates that the 'title' was probably an insult.

Tunrida is found in most German languages. It means 'fence rider', i.e. a person who sits on a fence, one leg either side of reality.

Hagzissa, root of the modern German *Hexe* (witch) has a similar use. It means 'hedge sitter'. Hedges were used, from Neolithic times, to protect settlements (see *Thorn* rune). A person who sits in the hedge, or passes through it, interacts with known reality (the village) and the dangerous realms beyond, relating the world of mortals with the realm of the spirits, gods, ghosts and demons. In Robert De Boron's version of the Merlin mythos (c.1180) Merlin is spellbound under a flowering whitethorn bush in the forest of Brocceliande in Brittany. In later periods the 'Hagzissa' became the 'hag', which in the original version could be applied to both sexes and all ages.

Galdarmadr, Gadarkuna, are men and women who practice 'galdr' 'galdar' or 'galstar', which signifies song and chant magick. The Indo-European root **Ghel-* means 'to call, shout, sing, scream.'

Vala, Wala. These are names for the priestesses in Germany.

Volor, Volva. This is the later Norse equivalent of Vala or Wala. It supposedly connects with *valr* 'the staff', making the volor 'staff-bearing women'. Famous walas were the women Weleda and Albruna, who upset Roman politics for years as they roused several tribes to revolt. It has been claimed that their names were also titles, but no certain proof has been offered. Wala seem to be a regular part of the priesthood while the Nordic Volor tend to travel through the country on their own or in small groups, healing diseases, selling spells and foretelling the future. Some claim that the *Valkyrie* (val = the dead, kyrie to choose, select, devour) are really a distorted vision of those priestesses. Several Eddic songs mention women who were Valkyries, and who had the skill to fly, astrally, to the battlefield to aid the hero of their choice.

Seidkona, Seidmadr. These words describe the people who practise Seid-magick, i.e. the art of seething. Seid-artists, as far as they are mentioned in literature, have a reputation for selling sorcery. Snorri tells us in **Ynglingasaga** 4-7, that Odin invented seidr, but that it was so dangerous and unclean that it was left to the women (in the later ages). Seid magick is used to make weather, work spells, heal, bind, divine or curse. The practice revolves around the use of chanting and the phenomena of obsession which causes the typical seething and trembling described below.

Zauberer. Is still a common word for 'sorcerer' in German. It comes from OHG *zaubar*, OE *teafor*, meaning 'red colour, red earth' and suggests the common practice of blood sacrifice. Runes were consecrated by *bloten*, i.e. they were activated by a few drops (or more) of blood, while the red earth is probably the oldest religious colour ever used. The Neanderthal people used to bury their dead in red earth, or to place their skulls in a bed of that substance. While our direct ancestors enjoyed painting their cave walls with the red stuff. 'To redden' an object means to consecrate it.

Fortune Tellers. They had numerous names. A *Wizago* (wizard) is a 'wise speaker', the same thing as a *Spamadr/Spakuna* in Old Norse. A *Troumrater*, OHG, is an interpreter of dreams, a *Tan Hlyta*, OE, a person who throws lots, i.e. rune staffs. A *Zeichnaere*, OHG, is a person who works, causes or interprets signs (*zeihhan*), nowadays a '*Zeichner*' is a graphic artist. *Sortileg* is a Gothic word for people who divine with lots while a Tôtrunar, OHG is a necromancer who has his fun with the dead.

Berserker meaning literally 'in bear skins' describes a special warrior who can call on his fylgia (guardian animal) and transforms into a beast. Many berserkers used to fight naked, heavily in trance and rage, their beast-consciousness making them so mad that they didn't even notice when they were wounded. The *Ynglingasaga* claims that this practise was invented by Odin.

9

Ancient Cosmology

The order of the world and the order of the mind are related. To observe how this order of consciousness evolved, let us cast our mind back to the beginning of time, when the world appeared young, vast and chaotic. Norse mythology begins, like the mythology of many countries, with a vast emptiness, with a void, a vacuum, predating all creation. The *Edda* calls this phase *Ginnungagap* (gaping void). Within this empty space, polarity develops. From the north, the frozen mists of *Niflheim* (fog home), came rolling to meet the fire sparks that came from southern *Muspelheim* (home of dried earth, home of destruction). As the heat and the dampness met, a secret alchemy took place, poison drops fell, which formed the ancient giant Ymir. In the beginning was the age when Ymir lived, and Ymir was all life at once. This is the Edda's first aeon, a time of chaos and beginning when laws were unknown and the ancient ones dwelled on the earth.

Ymir, as the first life, is too vast to know itself. Some scholars suspect that the modern German 'immer' (always, ever), lies hidden in Ymir's name. This is a valuable (though unproven) idea as it describes giant-consciousness so well. 'Immer' suggests a certain timelessness, a consciousness that experiences 'as now', ignorant of past and future, ignorant of causal thought and wide-eyed in the wonder of the primal aeon. In terms of history, the legend of the giants can be understood in many ways. If you study the evolution of human beings, you will notice how swiftly each new species appears. Somehow in the distant past, a group of apes developed into human beings. It happened, as far as we know, in a series of rather sudden mutations. To each stage of this development, the previous stage appeared both wise and primitive - wise because the 'older type' had plenty of time to find a good way of life, and primitive, as each new mutation had an altered consciousness which somehow transcended the abilities of its ancestors. To each new type, the older types were 'giants'.

The development of the human being begins with the discovery of individual rather than group identity. This change can be deduced from burial customs. An ape group does not bury its members. Maybe the dead ape is covered with a few branches, or some of its close companions stay nearby for a while, but soon enough they realize the finality of death and move on. For the early humans, and this includes the Neanderthal people, burial was a much more complicated business. We may safely assume that the burial of a definite individual has taken place when we encounter burial customs in which the dead, whole or part, were ritually eaten, or covered in red ochre; when graves are carefully built and designed to resist carrion eaters; when the dead are placed in customary positions and receive offerings; and when they are given weapons, tools, artifacts, ornaments or power links (such as mammoth ivory, ibex horns, fresh flowers etc). We may also infer that some notion of religion and a possible after-death state were common.

Now the discovery of identity begins with the 'I am', but speedily extends into the 'I am xyz.' For xyz, we may fill in one or more names, symbols, personal history, function in the group, skills, talents, problems, status in the hierarchy and all sorts of games which humans use to define themselves. Apparently it is not enough to be, we also insist on being this and that. It seems likely or so the spirits assure me that the 'group I', the value of the herd, lost meaning when each member began to acquire personality, uniqueness and creative expression.

As many mythologies suggest during these aeons of beginning, the ancient ones came to earth and formed our consciousness in their image. These primal entities obsessed and inspired our ancestors, taught them self-discovery and self-expression, and filled them with great lusts and drives, with passion and longing, until our ancestors became the living expressions, the human counterparts of the ancient and forgotten ones. This process by which out ancestors established their sense of identity must been wild and anti-social, they had great drives and few inhibitions. The ancient ones inspired them with the overwhelming intensity of their sentience, a sentience that has been considered evil and awful by most of the cultures that developed out of it.

Identity is a question of continuity. It requires a notion of time, definition of self and a couple of durable belief structures. As people began to discover the continuity of their personality not as a single state ('who am I right now?') but as a continuous process of development, they began to search for the cycles and regularities of nature. You will probably agree that a known, lawful and predictable world (or identity) is a much safer thing than the vast and wonderful chaos world of the beginning. Essentially we perceive the world as it suits our minds. Bandler and Grinder have pointed out (*Structure of Magic* Vol 1) that we cannot perceive the real world (whatever that may be): what we experience is a sensory representation of the world. We cannot perceive the real world directly: what we perceive is a model. Our sense experience is selected, ordered and represented by parts of our deep minds, which supply our conscious mind with a small, suitable and edited summary, which we, in our usual naivety, consider the entire universe. The deep mind does an excellent job shielding our conscious minds, our ego with its limited notions of 'I', from the overwhelming impact of whatever it is out there. Much of the order of nature is a reflection of our mind's order: the world is experienced according to our beliefs. Often enough, the restrictions that limit us do not exist in the real world but in our representation of it. During the nameless aeons, the ancient ones and their human incarnations had a wild and wonderful time. When the ice ages ended people began to settle and developed agriculture in ever increasing communities, organized and rational society developed requiring strict social, ethical and religious laws. The ancient ones found the new world too small for their liking. The chaotic forces of the dawn ages were banished, repressed and forgotten, and overwhelming ancient beings replaced by reliable gods with clear character and definite functions. In the book of the *Forgotten Ones*, we are told:

The bright gods did replace us on your altars,
the dark gods hid us in their temple veil.
The starred ones stirred within their awakening-time,
and cried our call of returning unto man.
We come, flesh-children,
through the midnight portal,
to the noon tide mountain,
to the waking mind.
Know us, and embrace us, and be whole.

In the *Edda*, we read that Ymir is slain by Wodan, Willi, We, and that out of its body, the entire world is fashioned. We hear of the Hrimthursen, the frost giants, keepers of the primal knowledge of the Ice-Ages, who were slain or driven into exile when the gods established order. We learn that the Fenris wolf had to be bound, and that in the process of binding, the bisexual sky god Twisto (the twinned one) lost a hand and became the one handed god Tyr. We also hear that at the end of the season, the chain bursts and the wolf runs wild. After the chaos ages with their outbursts of wild talent and reckless self-expression, the worlds had to be ordered. For a stable society, moral codes were needed, laws and social customs, traditions of behaviour and belief, a structure of natural science and knowledge which made the world a more reliable and limited place. These restriction arethe forces that keep the wolf locked.

In the *Voluspa* we learn that the gods went to the chairs of law giving names and paths to the stars, to order the times of the day, the quarters of the earth and the seasons of the year. We can examine this order when we observe the use of numbers in symbolism.

Zero: This corresponds to Ginnungagap, the gaping void before creation. This is the primal nothingness out of which all came and into which all returns. In a sense, this void is of ourselves and we share it with all that exists. What do we have in common with all that may possibly exist? Nothing. Nothing at all. I find that reassuring.

Unity: All is one. This is the basic state that knows neither separation nor difference nor change. In a sense, Ymir is one, and this one begets children with itself. We may see unity as a symbol for a 'here and now' consciousness that is typical for wild giants, aged mystics and small children.

Duality: This is the primal sexuality, in which we have an 'I' and a 'you', which communicate. The two are apart, and different, or at least they seem to think they are. In the *Edda*, duality can be found in the two extreme states of Niflheim, which is cold, pale, misty, veiled, and Muspelheim where the fire giants wallow in lava, fire and heat. Such polarities reflect the way our brains are built, which may explain why new-age prophets are often so geo-centric to speak of 'cosmic laws of polarity' where they should more wisely speak of 'our typical human way of ordering the world.' The point is that people like to perceive polarities, and feel quite comfortable and reassured by it. However, the simple binary model is not the only one. The mind is quite capable of transcending the basic 'yes or no?' by adding 'maybe'. Do we have to choose? The world is a big place and many things are possible.

Trinity: Out of duality, a threefold mystery develops which transcends its primal elements. 'Thou art that which thou dost prefer' wrote Austin Spare in his *Focus of Life*, 'the seer, the instrument of seeing or the seen.' If unity can be seen as 'I everywhere' and duality as 'I and you', trinity goes beyond by adding 'I and you and the communication between us'. In pagan mythology, starting with the triskell spirals of the megalith period, the three-fold mystery is of major importance. If we look at the world Ash, we recognize its triple symbolism. The tree, which was originally a mountain ash or rowan, consists of three units: roots, stem and branches. These three items correspond to the three levels of consciousness, which are known from many mythologies, especially from the Chinese.

1. **Roots**. This level corresponds to the earth, to flesh and form, to nourishment and manifestation. The roots level includes all past experience, all past life times and, in the genetic coding of our cells, the entire scope of survival skills developed by our ancestors. This includes wild instincts, power drives, sexual lust and all sorts of obsessions which civilized people feel shame and unease about.

2. **Stem**. This part of the tree connects heaven and earth: in essence, its joy lies in standing between the realms of the absolute (heaven) and the particular (earth). In cosmology, it can be considered the human level as we, just like the trees, live between the worlds. In human terms, this level corresponds with such ideas as reason, emotion, communication, change and social interaction.

3. **Branches**. The branches are the outfolding of the tree, its source of fresh energy, suppliers of breath and inspiration. In the branches we find seeds, and out of these seeds the next generation will be born. These seeds are potential trees in themselves. Thus, we may see the branch level as a symbol of potential for future development. In the heavenly plane we encounter the ideal forces, the ideal perceptions of ourselves, the gods and angels, the notions of what we may be like one day, leading to the idea of 'future selves'.

It should be obvious that the three levels of the tree function best when each of them can live according to its nature. We can apply the model to our own consciousness, to realize that a whole and holy being requires harmonious functioning in each of its parts.

Now the world tree is also a triple tree. Around its three branches and its three roots, three worlds may be found:

The world of ideals is the god-world **Asgard** (land of the Asir).

The world of instinct and obsession is the giant realm **Utgard** (out-land).

The world of reason and emotion is the human realm, **Midgard** (Middle land).

In Asgard the tree is called '**Yggdrassil**'. This word means 'Yggr's horse', 'Yggr' being an aspect of Odin/Wotan; the name means 'the terrible one' and is the source of

'ogre'. In many shamanic traditions, the shaman had to climb a world tree (or a world mountain) to receive initiation between the worlds. Here the shaman is free to understand and bind heaven and earth, and is also 'outside', and open for the spirit union. The *Edda* tells us that Odin received the rune vision as he hung from the tree between the worlds. This ritual should be seen as a way of transcending the limits of ego, as a formula of exhaustion, of going out and beyond. It is a rite of masochistic self-crucifixion, as some of the Christian scholars would have it. The career of Christ ends with the cross and its formula of suffering, that of Odin begins with the vision in the tree, and with the encounter of the spirit helpers. Had Odin died up there, the ravens and wolves would have devoured the carcass. Odin lived, but still the ravens and wolves devoured him, and became his friends for a lifetime and more. To understand this riddle I suggest you contact your own beasts. In the god world, there is a well at the root of the tree. Three Norns live there, Urda, Werdandi, Skulda, who weave destiny, purify all life in Urda's well, and create reality through divination.

In the world of the giants, the tree is called '**Mimameith**', or Mimir's tree. In the common German tradition, Mimir used to be the ruler of the hidden waters that flow through the earth, of the sacred springs, swamps and water currents, sometimes even the high seas. Mimir's well is the spring of all memory, and to drink from this source, Odin paid Mimir with one of his eyes. This eye became blind to the world, but opened up inside, into the brain, so that Odin sees outward and inward at the same time. We may learn from this episode where the sacred well of Mimir lies. In the *Fjölsvinsmal* we are told that Mimir's tree is so vast that no one can know its roots and branches at the same time, and that the tree is eternal. This corresponds nicely with giant-consciousness, which knows neither past nor future but the eternal now.

In the human world, the tree is called '**Lärad**' which means 'giver of peace and silence'. This is the living tree, not the ideal tree of the gods or the numinous tree of the giants but the manifest tree which lives on earth. The *Voluspa* lists numerous animals which feed on this tree, live in its branches or creep beneath its roots. This tree is eaten and constantly regrows. It is the functioning eco-system, a community of life forms which interact and depend on each other. Lärad is destroyed and reborn at the same time, a changing tree in a changing world, and this suits us humans very well. There is also a well at the human root of the tree: The 'roaring cauldron' *Hwergelmir*. This is the well of Hel or Helja who is the Queen and/or personification of the underworld beneath.

In Nordic cosmology, we have already encountered the three primal states Ginnungagap, Niflheim and Muspelheim. When the worlds were established and cosmos ordered, these three realms were repressed, and acquired a curious in-between status.

Ginnungagap, the gaping void, surrounds the earth now, and protects us from the giants who live among the stars.

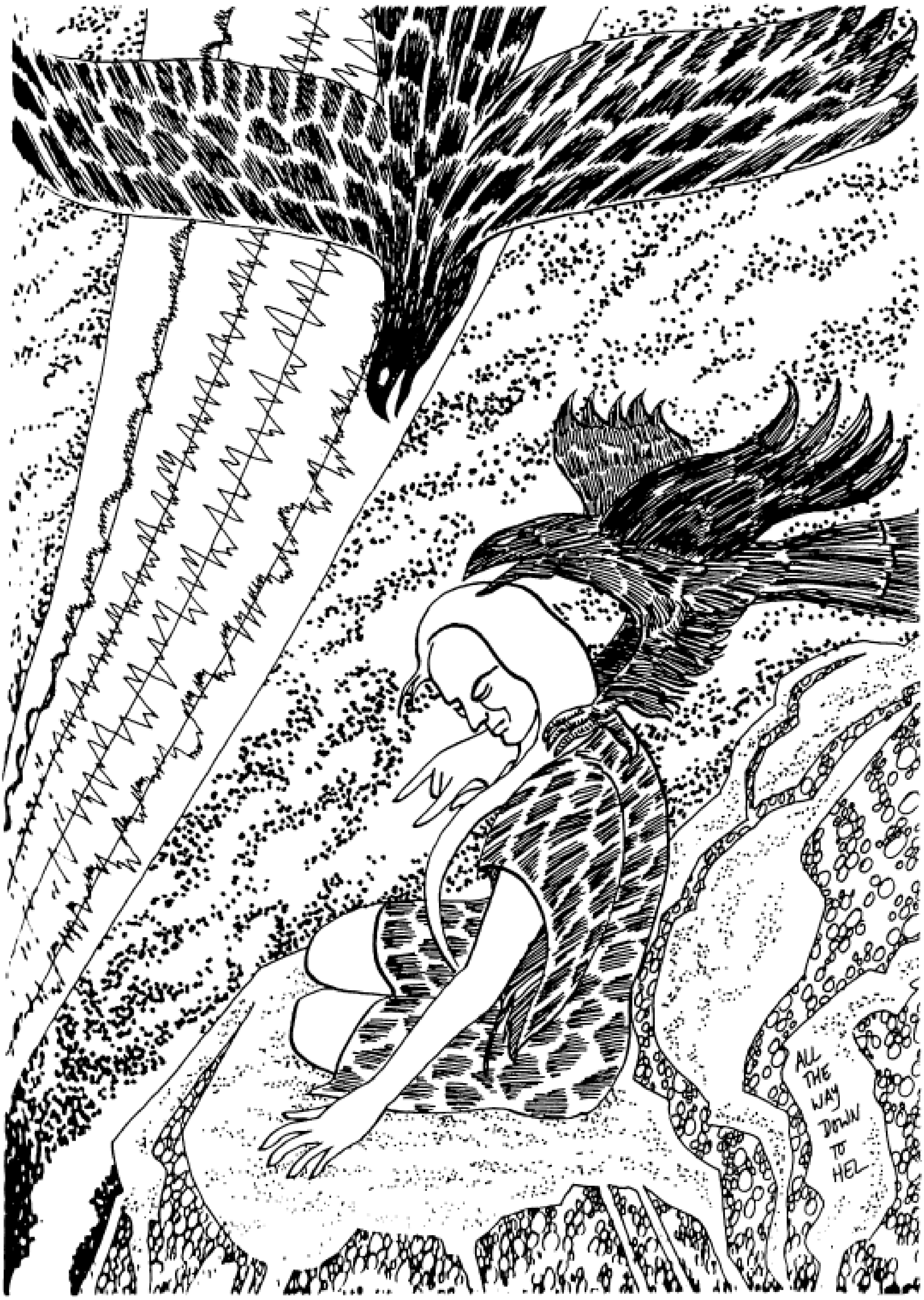
Niflheim became the classic underworld. When people die, they encounter after-life visions of paradise that suit their nature.

However, there comes a time when the illusions fade. No matter how glorious Valhalla may be, after a time the warriors, and even the gods, are done with glory, and find that the vision fades. Then the gates of hell open and Helja receives the dead. The

prose *Edda* tells us she rules over nine worlds, over realms of fog and forgetfulness, over dim and twilight realms, over the places where people become shadows, walking endlessly through mist and fog, in an atmosphere that knows no time nor place, only the eternal veils of fog. You would do well to understand that this is not a punishment. From one point of view (Valhalla) all life is glory and battle and feasting. From another, Niflheim, life is an illusion peopled by shadows searching for meaning and purpose, and finding none. Helja is our lady of the veils, in that she may cloud our minds or reveal with clarity; in that she hides, and brings forgetfulness, or sings a song of memories revealing ancient mystery. From her point of view, human aims and strife and struggle are rather meaningless, coming to terms with this is something that people learn in Niflheim. However, it is not only our world which is seen as the roll of the mists, but also our notions of ourselves. In Niflheim there is an eagle, 'Hräswelgr' (to indulge in carrion) and a dark dragon, 'Nidhöggr' (to crouch underneath), who destroy the dead bodies of belief and strip the soul of its name, purpose, past and future. Freed of this accumulated baggage, the soul spark is sucked up by the 'roaring cauldron' and comes to be reborn elsewhere. The idea of reincarnation is common to Germans and Celts alike. Sadly, we don't know how they thought reincarnation would work or by what laws it was governed. Now if you should chance to stumble into Niflheim, which is an experience I can highly recommend, you would do well to consider your ego and your identity as shadows, or mist illusions, which may be but do not need to be. There is no certainty in this realm, nor will you find reality, as all is illusion. If you understand this, you will realize the truth behind the veiling fog.

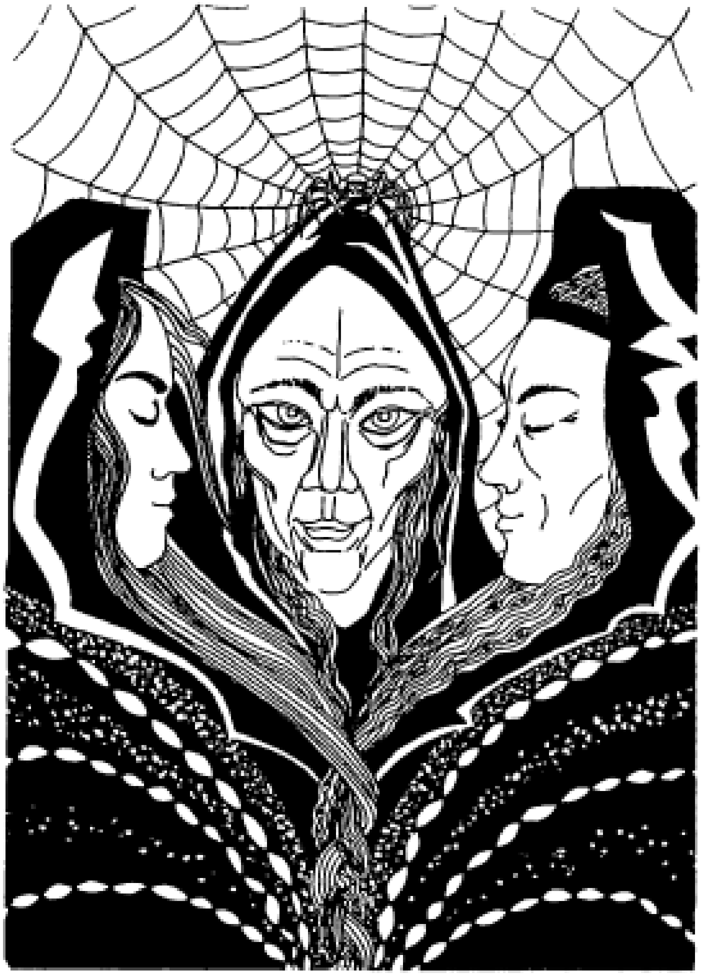
In **Muspelheim**, the 'home of dry earth', things are very different. This is the realms of Loki and the fire giants, the white hot heart of our planet. Here you will enjoy surges of passion, lust and overwhelming instincts. Muspelheim is hot and bright and so intense that the feeble human reason is a plaything to the great pulse of magma, fire, flame and gas. If we can leave our egos behind, we can learn to dance in the eruptions of this primal fire.

Now you may wonder what such models are good for. Remember that the mythological model supplies a topography of the soul, and that the order of the world (no matter how bizarre or fanciful) is also a map of the mind. You may have heard of the 'astral projection', of people who 'leave that body' (meaning body awareness is largely forgotten) and travel in the astral world, which is the world of dreams and imagination. Through this art, which is explained in practical way in chapter 27, the trained mage may travel into parts of the mind which are usually unconscious. These 'parts of the mind' will represent themselves to consciousness as countries, lands and spaces, through which the mage may travel, and where s/he can encounter strange beings, who are the representatives of these countries (or parts of the mind). These magical journeys change the structure of consciousness from within. Should you meet Helja, for instance, you get a wonderful chance to come to terms with the parts of your deep mind which are symbolized by Niflheim, and perhaps you will even learn how to use the inbetweenness of Niflheim to contact other worlds. The fog is everywhere and nowhere, so that all worlds can be touched. Or you may meet Loki. You would learn some surprising things about yourself and you may even enjoy them (provided you enjoy Loki). Your personality may disintegrate, but then, worse things could happen. Identity and personality are plastic after all, and are meant to be taken apart from time to time. The ego is there to be changed, and if you ask humbly, Helja and Loki will no doubt be eager to help you in this job.


ALL THE WAY DOWN TO HEL

One of the ways to learn about runes is to travel to the tree, from there to any inbetween state, and to find a way into the rune worlds. Each rune can be used as a gate or doorway, and if you are in harmony with it, pass through, and come into an astral (imaginary) world that describes the rune much better than any book could. If you travel in such a rune world you will discover your own meaning for the rune, which will be the genuine meaning in that it works for you, and is inspired by your deep mind. Some of these worlds will be beautiful, others may be incomplete, diseased or otherwise out of balance. If you travel into them you get a chance to heal them, to right the balance, and when you return to your body and the 'real' world, you will realize that the healing has changed your reality from within.

I should perhaps add that such encounters can be dangerous. True, the visions are 'imaginary', they are not 'objective' entities and places but dream-like representations. This does not change the fact that the deep mind, which is the reality that these visions represent, is very real, and indeed creates all the realities that you perceive. You act in a representation, but the reality behind the representation is more real than anything you encounter in this lifetime. If you meet Helja for instance, you will certainly learn about the horrors of death, forgetfulness, exhaustion and illusion. Your visions will involve corpses, bones, disease and will probably show your own death with lots of variations. Now you might say that all this is the imagination. True, it is experienced as imagination, but behind it lies a reality. If you say 'you are not real' to Helja, she may reply 'neither are you', and you would both be right. Or you might travel to Muspelheim. Instincts and obsessions will arise which you were never conscious of,



and which, once evoked, you will have to accept and integrate. The *Edda* tells us that when the gods tried to repress Loki's chaotic fierceness they had to chain Loki. It also tells us that the chains broke, and that the resulting outburst resulted in the end of the world. This is an important lesson. If you meet Loki, forget about the chains. Have a good laugh with him and become his blood brother if you can. Not an easy task, but a damned sight better than restriction.

The Norns and other Celtic/German Trinities.

Nyrnir means 'weavers', the word refers to the spiders who build their realities by weaving, creating and devouring long strands of protein, creating a universe consisting of structure, connection and the spaces between them. The Norns weave fate, they cast lots which bind destiny and prophecy a future that creates itself through being divined. The *Edda* mentions three Norns by name:

Urda, who refers to the past, has the syllable 'ur' in her name, which denotes great age, originality, and the primeval (especially in German). (see Uruz rune).

Werdandi is the same word root in another time. 'Werden' in German means 'to become', and refers to the present time.

Skulda can be found in the English 'shall' and 'should', and refers to the future. The northern German *Schuld* contains her name, it means 'a debt' or in a negative complex, 'guilt'. The original word had no negative implications. It simply pointed out that the bill is not paid yet, for good or evil.

The three together are 'wyrda', or the 'weird sisters'. Modern writers frequently pretend that these three Norns are the only ones, a centralized fate-producing unit for all worlds. Such centralized notions ('they bind the fate of all') are typical for our modern outlook. In the *Edda* we are told that there are many more Norns, some of them Aesir, some elves and some dwarves. Perhaps we should conceive destiny as a complex weaving that is done by many Norns in many places, each of whom processes space and time in her or his own way. Ultimately, this leads to a model in which every mage functions like a spider, building a mandala of realities and projecting it on the substance of the world. Indeed we are the Norns of our own lifetimes.

Another trinity evolved around Odin/Wotan. In the prose *Edda* we meet him, for example, as Har (the High), Iafnhar (equally high) and Thridi (the third). These three hold a riddle game with king Gylfi, in which each aspect supplies a different point of view.

Then there is the trinity of the brothers (aspects).

1. Wotan.

3. Weh.[1]

2. Willi.

1. **Wotan** is unity. This refers to pure self, pure awareness and energy. Wotan, as you read in the history chapter, was originally a god of rage, of shamanism, of wild trances, song and ecstasy.

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[1] This triplet may be familiar to Qabalists. Perhaps Binah is Weh, Chokmah is Willi and Kether is Wodan.

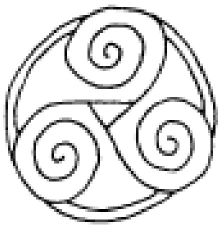
2. **Willi** connects with our word 'will', and the 'true will' being the individual expression of the universal and evolutionary will. This will includes change, evolution, transformation.

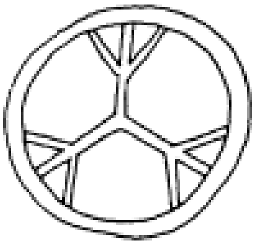
3. **Weh** or **Ve.** 'Sanctuary' or 'holy grove', i.e. the natural temple. Modern German *Weh* is something painful, like the English 'woe!' German *Wehen* are the pains of childbirth, while a *Weihe* is consecration and initiation. Sometimes the *Edda* gives us 'Hönir' for Willi, Honir is a silent watcher figure, and 'Lodur' for Weh, who is 'flaming', an aspect of Loki. These three created human beings out of the 'ask' (ash tree) and the 'embla' (alder tree). In the *Voluspa* we are told that Odin gave soul, Hönir gave sense and Lodur supplied blood and rich colour. It is no surprise that the triskell, (the triple spiral), can be seen as a symbol for the Norns and Wodan alike.

These triads may be useful for divination. We might consult the Norns when we want to know how something will develop. We could select three runes, or throw three dice, so that the first rune refers to the beginning, the second to its present situation, and the third to what should develop out of it. The Wodan, Willi, Weh pattern can be used when we wish to understand three aspects of an idea. The first rune, Wodan, describes the essence, the second rune its motion, energy and meaning and the third its manifestation in body, earth and reality.

The number nine.

Where three is already the entire universe in north European nature religion, the nine, as 3 x 3, is beyond comprehension.





The ancient tree, for instance, connects three worlds, three planes, three wells and three guardians. It has three basic roots, but nine branches spreading over all worlds. When Odin spent nine days and nights on the tree, or Frey has to wait nine nights for his marriage with the frost-cold northern earth, or Grimnir waits for nine long nights, chained between the fires, it will appear obvious that the number nine meant something like 'forever'.

The four quarters

Another basic pattern is the fourfold symmetry. The four is really an extension of the two, a doubling of the double, a cross and the crossroads that connect the world ⊕ You are here, at the centre. In the *Edda*, we encounter the four dwarves who support the world; Nordri and Sudri, Austri and Westri. Often the quarters of the earth are connected with solar symbols. For the time being the sun rises in the east. This connects the east with the idea of birth, spring, beginning. In the south, it is strongest, which makes south the quarter of light, heat, summer and fire, unless you happen to live in Australia. West symbolizes age, and the going down of the sun. In many cultures, west is the direction of death. Then follows north, which is the direction of maximal darkness, and thus a fitting representative of winter, earth, cold and the sparkle of the stars. North is the direction of the night, its darkness is the sleep of the unborn. To the Celts and Germans, the night came before the day, just like pregnancy comes before birth. The Celtic year began in November, after all stores were gathered in, with the celebration of the ancestors. Winter was seen as a preparation for the year to come. It is an interesting fact that most pagan traditions place the altar in the North, which is the direction of the Tir-star (north star), which was considered the 'need nail' around which the heavens revolve. The Christians, with their sun and light orientation, introduced the custom of placing the altar in the east, which is quite fitting for their solar 'birth, glory, crucifixion, resurrection' symbolism.

When we recognize the order of the seasons in the times of day, in the four elements, in the directions of the earth, this is a case of a basic model that gets deeply integrated in our notions of cyclic development and evolution. To our ancestors, each of the seasons meant a different outlook on life, and indeed, a different lifestyle. When modern witches celebrate the wheel of the year, they are continuing a tradition that is more important than ever. By celebrating the seasons, we keep ourselves in tune with the natural world. Many cultures believe that if they stop celebrating the seasonal festivals, all nature would get out of order. In our modern world of concrete, plastic and neon, all nature *is* out of order. By celebrating the rhythms of change in nature, we keep our own nature in balance. The seasonal festivals are not only meant to harmonize humanity with nature. They should, in my opinion, also be opportunities to give our thanks to the natural world, and to send joy and blessing to all living beings. Nature itself needs healing in our days of pollution and waste. By going out into the wild we remember ourselves.

Systems of cosmology, such as those described in this chapter, are more than idle theory. Where they are not based on natural facts they rely on psychological ones. Cosmology is an attempt to order awareness in meaningful patterns. As in every functional Qabalistic system, the model you believe will soon reveal itself in all aspects of life. Once you begin to think in terms of trinity for instance, all life will appear threefold to you. Now the important thing is not whether you order your world in twos, threes, fours or six-hundred three score and six, as each and every model has its advantages. What matters is that you remember that no model is quite like the truth, and that truth includes the freedom to use all models, and to go beyond them. Any model which is believed with sufficient intensity will soon produce its own confirmation. A model is a bit like a mask, in that it covers reality and rearranges it. Truth wears many masks and models, and every single one of them is false. If you will freedom for your own thoughts, feel free to use any model that suits you.

10

Runes And Nature

The Celtic and Germanic people, and the cultures which preceded them, considered themselves to be parts of nature. Tacitus tells us that the Germans would not tolerate cities or large settlements: 'they live alone and apart from others, wherever a spring, a field or a forest suits them' (*Germania*, 16). This accords with the needs of cultures that still possess the ability to identify with the ecological system that surrounds them. Apart from the ceremonies of the yearly cycle (during which whole tribes travelled for days to meet at some important site), they observed a number of religious practices closer to home. Sacrificial offerings would be laid out for the spirits of the house and the fields, and frequently memorial stones erected nearby.

The peasant of pre-history was more closely bound to the earth than we can imagine: the land was life, meaning survival and the continuation of the family or clan. Where a state-bound, centralized civilization (such as Sumer, Egypt, Rome) can afford to build monumental palaces and churches, a tribal system has neither the necessary labour force nor the use for temples or domes. To the Pagan people of the north, the gods had not become as sophisticated as they were to, say, city-dwellers of the Near-East. To realize their existence, they had but to look at the wildness of the elements, the living forces of nature, the perfection of the system as a whole. There was no need to build sacred houses for the gods, as the gods were everywhere, spoke in the roar of the oceans, the thunder of the storms, whispered in the foliage, danced in the flames or dreamed in the ageless silence of the earth. These gods were both terrible and beautiful; life-giving and death-dealing; overwhelming and unlimited. Other, invisible life forms were named 'elves' (called Alfen, Alben, Ilben, in the *Edda*), beings who direct the growth of plants and trees and 'dwarves' who deal with seeds, bones, crystals and the metals hidden in the deep.[1] It hardly matters whether one considers the gods, elves, dwarves, etc., in an anthropomorphic or abstract sense. The gods give power and idealism to humanity; humanity gave form and character to the gods.

To understand nature religion, one has to realize that everything, be it the elements, the seasons, the plants, beasts, minerals, the people, the depth of the earth and the width of the skies, is sentient and alive. Modern people have largely forgotten what it means to experience the elements. To understand nature we have to give ourselves into her care, and to experience first hand what heat, cold, day, night, hunger, nourishment, strength and exhaustion may mean. Who remembers the old days when possession of fire meant the difference between life and death? To learn about runes one should not only practice at home but go and dare the wilderness. The language of the runes is a language of nature. Many rune-forms are growth forms. 'Giving oneself' (gebo) means to open up to new experience. To walk in the woods, by day and by night, and in all kinds of weather. To feel the passage of the seasons. To be cold, to get wet with rain or snow, to lose one's way, to stumble around in the dark, to rest in the sun, to flow with the fog and to dance with the wind. To watch the stars, to collect herbs and leaves for healing and nourishment, to learn the ways of the beasts. To run madly cross-country, to scream, to laugh, to celebrate feasts on the mountaintops. We remember the meaning of nature insofar as we give ourselves; and each memory is a memory of ourselves. The wildness, beauty and passion we find in nature is an expression of our own being, and an expression of those states so clumsily called 'god', 'self', 'all-being' etc.

Loving nature means to love oneself. Nature religion is sterile without nature experience. This may sound self evident, but far too many witches and magicians nowadays never dare to leave their comfortable temple rooms. Catching pneumonia in a snow storm is far less dangerous than suffocating in an armchair. You may find that nature, in all her joyous and dangerous moods, can initiate you much better than any temple or cult can. We are nature and the discovery of the wilderness is the discovery of our primordial self-hood.

Of course it is possible to activate the rune powers in any place, be it on the mountain top, in a desert or in the middle of the city. Will is the essential factor. Many readers may have to do most of their practice indoors or at home. No harm will come from this (apart from complaining neighbours) provided you keep some nature contacts up. A 'nature contact' is a place or a situation that allows access to the elements and the primal levels of our being. A moderate nature contact would be a room immediately under the roof, a garden or maybe a river or park nearby. A walk in the fields can be useful, or a real fire at home. Once a week, however, one should go out into the wild, if possible alone. Remember Algernon Blackwood's haunting phrase 'the wind is roaring in the forest . . . further out.' We go into the wilderness to

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[1] The dwarves of mythology seem to be a curious mixture: their image seems to be composed out of several ideas. The nature spirits called dwarves have been confused with a number of dark, small races, the 'little people' who were driven into the wild by the larger races that conquered them. Possibly this pattern originated with the confrontation of Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal people.

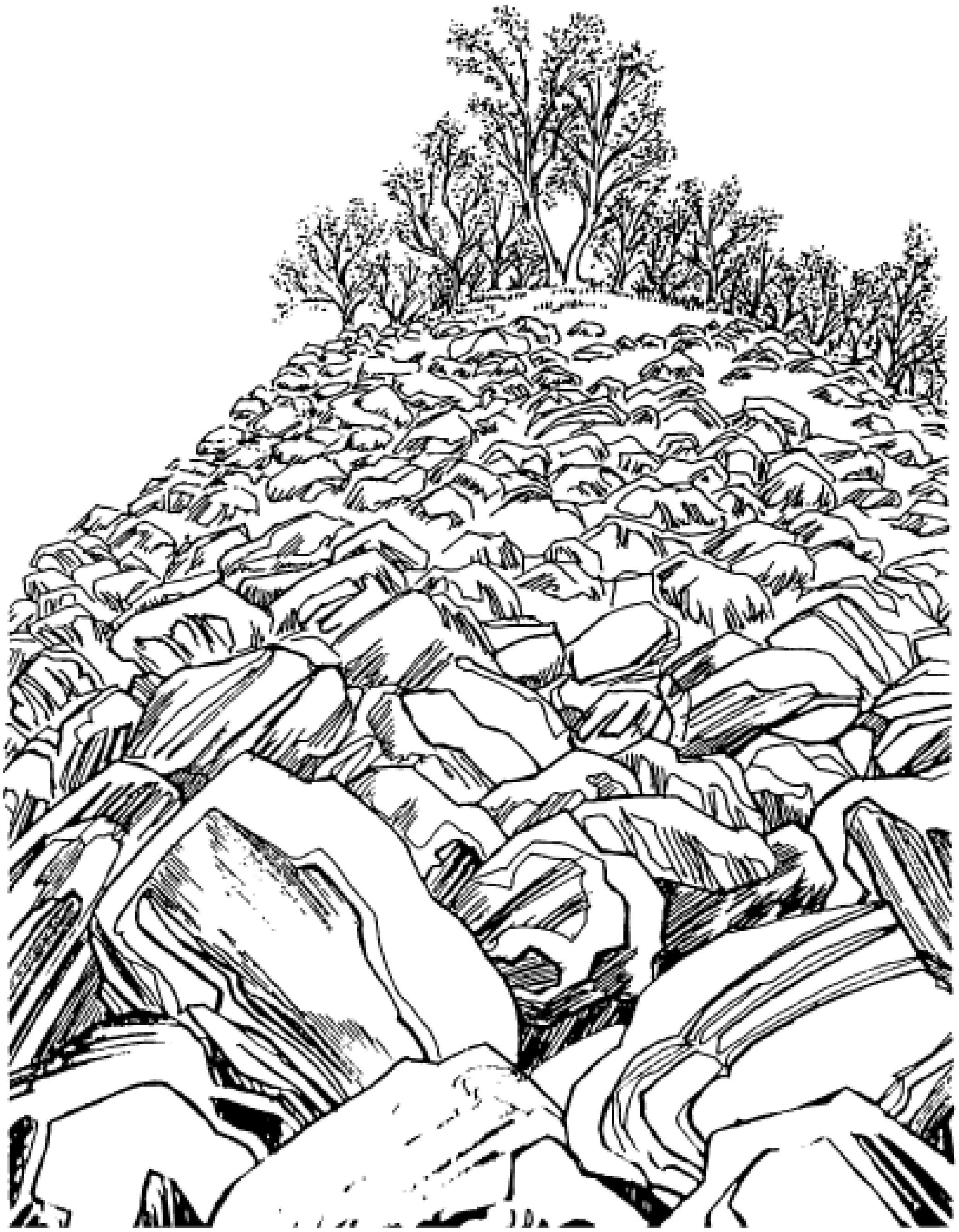
remember.

In ancient China, a system of nature study developed that sought to understand and control the forces of earth, water, fire and wind. According to the Chinese 'Feng Shui' tradition, the body of our planet is criss-crossed by energy channels or meridians that distribute life force across the land. These energy channels are also found in the human body (microcosmos), where they are balanced and stimulated by means of acupuncture, moxa and similar therapies. The energy channels transport the ch'i, the life-force, to harmonize the functions of the body and to connect it with other life forms. Human beings are said to relate to life and nature as the earth does to the stars. Where a ch'i line runs across the earth, the scenery is shaped by and shapes that power. Body and spirit influence each other. A similar tradition of energy flow once existed in Europe. We have no idea what this science was called; nowadays it is mostly referred to as 'geomancy'. Chinese and European Geomancy share the use of the term 'dragon lines' to designate the energy channels. Mountain ridges and cliffs frequently indicate the flow of these lines. According to Feng Shui teachings, the cosmic ch'i touches the earth at the mountain tops. From the height, the energy flows along the ridges and hills towards the valley. When the ch'i reaches the plains, it is brought to diffusion and transported to the oceans by rivers and streams. Given proper training, one can learn to feel the flow of the ch'i in the earth, and to follow the dragon lines through the wild.

To our ancestors, the energy currents of the earth were far more obvious than they are to us. Where they would have known 'places of power' modern people generally only feel 'funny' or 'spooky', if they notice the difference at all. Geomancy is mainly a question of sensitivity, not of theoretical comprehension or abstract study.

Geomancy teaches that the earth and the quality of its energy influence one another. The energy does not simply flow downhill but seems to interact with the scenery. At some spots the ch'i bursts out, at others it collects, at some it is swept away by rivers and streams, and at some we find the ch'i stagnating, which makes such sites unhealthy for habitation. In Chinese Feng Shui we find a number of more or less useful practices to find out the proper sites for living. The three sorts of homes - temples (gods), houses (humans) and graves (ancestors) - all have different energy requirements. Very little is known about European geomancy. It did not survive the 'Dark Ages'. That a system did once exist, however, can be deduced from folklore, rural customs, the locations of old shrines etc. If you practice rune magick in the open, you will soon learn that the energy flow differs from time to time, and place to place. The state of your inner world (set) and the state of the outer world (setting) influence each other. By generating rune energy, you will find yourself involved in a form of communication, that is, an exchange of energy/consciousness between micro and macrocosmos. This exchange is different in certain surroundings, so that we may attribute certain states of consciousness to certain forms of scenery. More so, we find that all over the world specific landscapes and clime have produced very similar forms of nature worship. Here are a few notes on the meaning of scenery to the Germanic/Celtic way of life.

Mountains. In middle Europe, we frequently encounter 'ring-wall' systems on the mountain tops. Some of them, called *oppida* by the Romans, were fortified towns housing up to 30,000 inhabitants. Oppida are common in southern Germany, Czech, Austria, Switzerland and France. Smaller ringwalls were in use as forts, a place of refuge in times of war. A ring wall is a belt of stone boulders enclosing the mountain top.*Most ring wall systems consist of several belts, or are worked in spiral fashion. At one time or another, most of the ring walls have been fortified by the use of wooden poles, to create a primitive but efficient sanctuary. Julius Caesar describes the construction of Oppida walls in the seventh book of *Bellum Gallicum*. Academics tend to believe that the Celts built the ring walls for military purposes. There are indications, however, that some ring walls are much older that the Celtic culture. Fortified ring wall systems had to be rebuilt repeatedly, as the wooden structures of the wall tended to fall apart every couple of decades. From their geographical location, we may deduce that not all ring walls were meant as fortifications. Some of them seem to have been religious sanctuaries or meeting places for the population. On top of the mountain, the forces of heaven and earth unite. The mountain top parallels the shamanic world-tree insofar as both are places between the worlds. There were few settlements on high mountain tops, usually the weather was too drastic and the water supply difficult. But there are many remnants of religious activity surviving to this day. Religion and law were closely connected in the old days. Thus we find 'ting-places' on the mountain tops, sanctuaries where the rituals of the seasons were celebrated, laws were made and



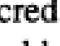
the population met for judgment, festivity, decision making and 'symble' carousal. (see Tacitus *Germania*). Political activity was balanced by the symble-customs (the syllable 'sym' meant to 'to join' to 'be together') i.e. getting dead drunk with divine sanction. Mead is a very pleasant way of harmonizing the relations of gods and mortals. Ring wall systems frequently appear in clusters, which means that the fortified main structure is surrounded by a number of smaller systems for religious activity. Such sites would be marked by holy trees, small shrines or blessed wells. Often, it was dangerous to approach such places. The religious sanctuary was usually secluded and difficult to reach, so that the exhaustion of the traveller constituted part of the initial purification. On arrival, the exhaustion and weariness would swiftly transform into clear-minded exhilaration. The element of danger is vital for this. If you have ever had the pleasure of stumbling across a ring wall with its thousands of huge stone boulders at night, you will come to appreciate the meaning of commitment. The importance of ring walls for military purposes increased in the late period, particularly during the Roman occupation. On occasion, whole tribes fled to these places of 'divine and human justice', even if the supply of water and food was difficult. The Romans, after months of weary siege warfare, developed a process of drenching the wooden structures with oil. Then they laid fire and waited for the wall to collapse. At some ring walls the very earth is drenched with fury, blood and despair, so that a sensitive person encounters unpleasant surprises. Not only the gods were supposed to live on the mountain tops; we may also find stone giants or dwarves in such places. Fairy-tales commonly relate that there are 'forgotten gods' or 'kings from under the hill' resting inside mountains, dead but dreaming, and waiting for full resurrection in the time of wholeness. On some mountains the earth power is so strong that the very rock seems to pulse with it. To understand the flow of the earth currents we should remember that the earth, like everything else, flows in waves. Observe how the earth once streamed and you can see the avenues of energy, some sweeping to the valley, some reaching across the mountain ridges to other peaks. Observe the growth of the trees. Along the 'dragon lines' we frequently encounter so called 'dragon trees', i.e. trees with a coiled, wild and intense appearance which seem to vibrate with the power of the place. Where the power is diluted, trees look uniform, but where the energy is dense, trees are highly individual, and very much awake. Wind is also important. Exposure to storm wind does more than just blow away the heat, it can sweep much of the earth ch'i away. The same goes for water. Flowing water transports the ch'i, swifter than the earth does (the colder the water the more energy it can hold), so that a simple little stream may drain all the energy out of its surroundings, and rush it downhill with great speed. To understand geomancy, you have to feel with your eyes. There are thousands of signatures everywhere which suggest the essence of each place. To see a mountain (or whatever) you could look into it, go beyond the surface and feel its substance. Seeing the form, penetrate to the interior and unfold from inside. Through identification, love and voidness you may realize the essence, which is also the essence of ourselves. Each mountain has its own distinct character and reacts to magick, rune practice, music etc., in its own way. We cannot touch the mountain with our reason. Only by being the mountain we may touch its sentience, the living meaning of its form. We are one with the earth; and this statement should not be the result of logical comprehension but of direct experience.

Hills. Here the earth force is already modified and calmed. Just as the mountains are home to gods and giants, we may encounter human heroes resting under the hills. Many of these are the ghosts of warriors, indicating that hilltops, like mountaintops, were widely used to build fortresses. Celtic burial customs often required the erection of a small hill over the grave chamber, a custom that may go back to megalith religion with its earth covered dolmens and barrow graves. Hill country is hunting territory. If we consider hunting as the highly religious affair it used to be, we find that it is not human power but divine grace that supplies food, hence survival. The gods gives life, the hunter kills to feed the community. By sacrifice of plants, beasts or occasionally humans, many tribes attempted to redress the balance and to give back in symbolic form, what the gods had supplied.

Sacred groves were places of sanctuary, where the seasonal fire festivals, sacred marriages or blood sacrifices were celebrated. (See *The Golden Bough* by Sir George Frazer). It is not true that the sacred groves consisted entirely of oaks. Roman superstition attributed a single species of tree to the sinister ceremonies of the Druids, with whom they were hardly on friendly terms. Modern study indicates religious activity for just about any sort of tree at one time or another. There were cults of the birch, beech, rowan, hazel, elm, willow and many other species. In Germany, and Scandinavia, many sanctuaries were dedicated to Ullr, lord of winter, hunting, killing and the Yule ceremony, whose sacred tree was the yew. (See my book *Visual Magick* for further exploration of sacred trees and related folk customs.)

The Plains. The earth energy is usually diffuse when it reaches the fields and settlements. The magick of the plains is agricultural and social. It is not the primal gods of forest and wilderness that trouble the peasants of the Neolithic ages, but the more human shades (ghosts, doppelgänger, ancestors) and the numerous spirits in charge of weather, fertility and growth. The fields are cultivated - humanized, so to speak. They are limited and protected with walls or thorn hedges (this relates to the thurisaz rune). Also, they are property. Property, in the sense of ground owned and inherited, is probably an idea that began when people stopped travelling and began to work the earth. To the peasant the fields are an extension of the body: they are the future of the clan. Settlement means commitment, endurance and stubborn determination. The cults of the fields concern themselves with human problems. Typical examples are house spirits, ancestor worship, protective spirits, human ghosts and the beings of nature, elves, sylphs, fairies etc., who supply the blessings of growth, abundance and good weather. Together with such beliefs exist a number of customs to limit the forces of the wilderness, to keep the ancient ones away and to exorcise the repressed energy that will always accumulate in society. The gods themselves appear more distant and controlled - where each hunter of the nomadic aeons used to relate personally to the deities and demons of the wild, the peasant community employs a tribal shaman to speak with the unknown and to keep up the psychological health of the clan. The cults and life-forms of the plains are frequently fatalistic and emphasize security and limits.

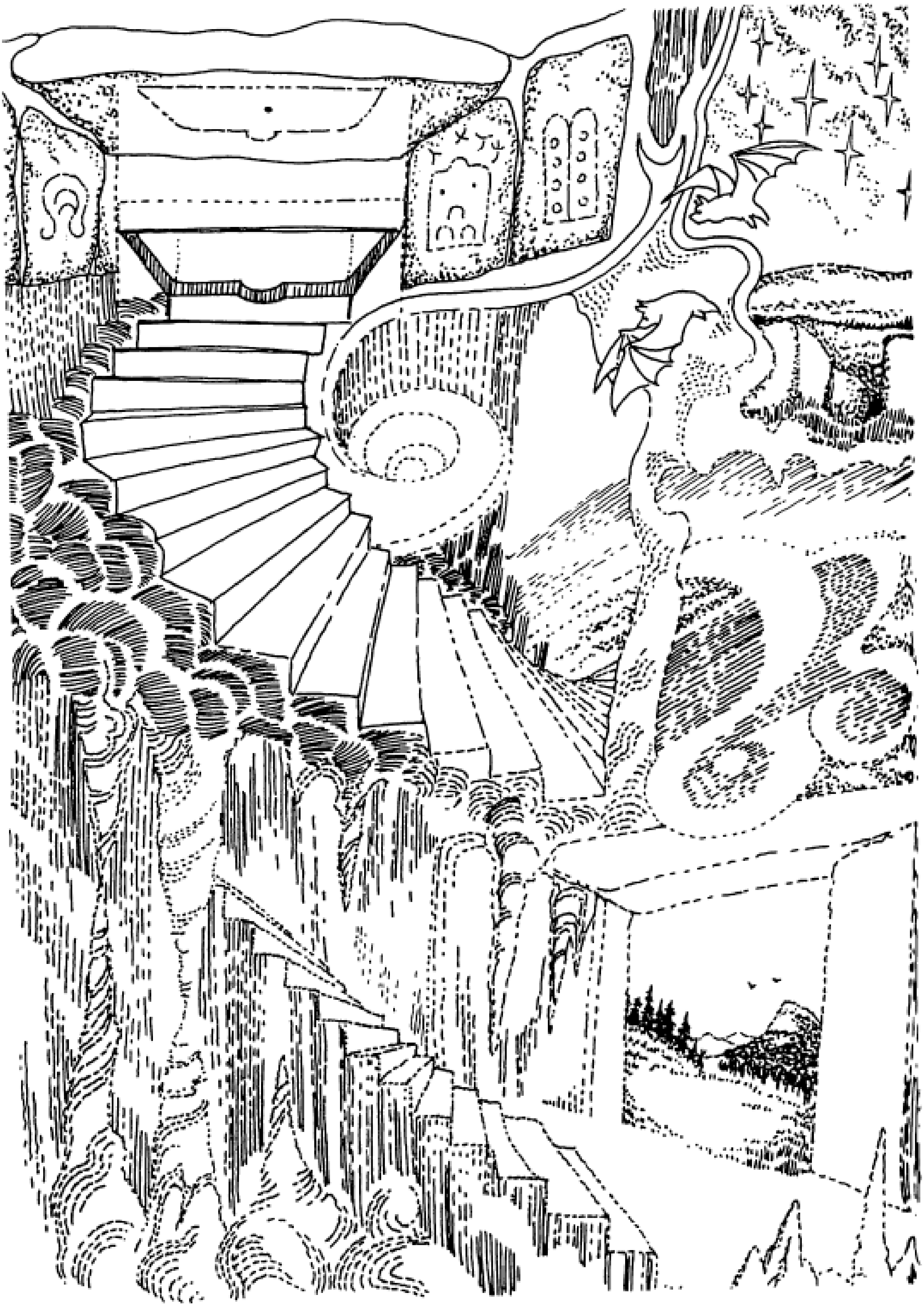
Rivers and streams. They are conductors of energy. Cold water binds energy and distributes it through the land, concentrating the power in some river bends and draining it in others. Chinese Feng Shui teaches that each curve in a river has a side that accumulates power, and a side that is constantly emptied by the rushing waters. This may be important for your practice. Some sites may exhaust while others may overload the practitioner. When the aura is overcharged through misapplication of rune energy or through contact with unwholesome places or people, cold water (a shower for instance) is useful to clear the aura up again. Warm water is not as efficient, as it already contains some power of its own. Some rivers functioned as trade routes long before roads were known. Travellers on the water or settlers near the shore usually personified their river, attributing character, taste and habits to it and perceiving its consciousness in the form of water spirits, undines, kelpies etc. Many of these river spirits could on occasion be violent, so that the peace of the river had to be bought by regular sacrifice of beast or man. Some rivers have a rather gruesome reputation in this respect; if the sacrifice was omitted,the river took what it desired.

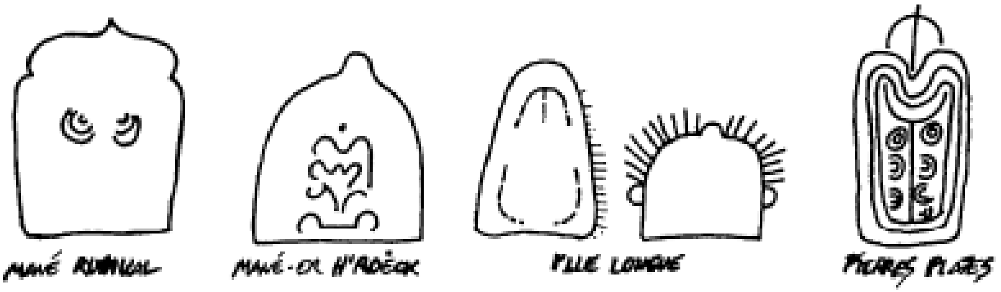
Springs and wells. These symbolize doors and gateways into the deep. Here is the spot where life (water) rises from the dark. The idea of birth, purification and passage is an obvious one. Some wells in central Germany were dedicated to Holle and a popular place to pray for children. From the birth idea comes the use of springs for purification. This is the major use of Urda's well at the roots of the Yggdrasil tree (). Missionaries fought it with all their might, exorcising and baptizing hundreds of sacred wells on their way across the land. A well may also allow passage to the underworld. Many fairy tales, such as the 'Frau Holle' (hel, Helja) begin with some person falling into a well and through the water into another world. In Celtic Germany and France, wells were used for healing. Sick people undertook long journeys to live near a sacred well. To 'take the water' and to consult the Druids about their ailments. When the Romans occupied the country, they continued the custom. A holy well of the Gallic-Roman period was graced by a big stone stele showing three goddesses with baskets of fruit. These *Matrona* looked very much alike and of the same age, so we cannot inflict the popular wiccan trinity of virgin, mother and hag on them. Commonly these sacred wells were surrounded by hostels. Many of them became spas and are popular to this day. In some countries we find the sacred wells guarded by specially trained attendants. Where service was neglected or the well left open by mistake the waters of the bottomless deep were likely to rise and drown whole valleys. A number of lakes in Wales are said to have been born this way.

Swamp and marshland. These are among the oldest landscape types known to us. When the ice retreated, people began to journey across the new land, an open and barren country with few trees (mainly birch, rowan, willow) and sparse vegetation. Winter made the Tundra an icy desert with howling snowstorms. Summer turned the marsh into a muddy, mosquito infested bog. The first settlers in this country had to travel in order to survive. The tribes carried small hide tents and made their meagre living through hunting, fishing, collecting berries, mushrooms, herbs etc. In winter, people came close to starvation while in summer they lived off migrating reindeer and horses. In some swamps the remnants of numerous reindeer sacrifices were found. As the climate grew milder, people began to settle. However the memory of the swamp as a place of danger and magick continued. The moors too remained a sacred (and haunted) place up to the Roman occupation. In its own way, the swamp is as inaccessible as the mountain top. The bog symbolizes the state between worlds, i.e. a reality between firm and fluid. Here we have a place of great danger where a transition between worlds may occur. A power-site where objects may be given to the earth/

water/deep without necessitating the effort of digging a hole. In geomancy the earth energy is said to stagnate in swamp territory, giving a delicious touch of morbidity and putrefaction to the atmosphere. When you transcend prejudice and fear, the beauty of the swamp will reveal itself. To enter swampland sanctuaries creates a state between tension and commitment that is useful to the magician. The spirits of the moors are usually imagined as very beautiful, unrefined and untrustworthy. They have received sacrifices during all aeons of human evolution - food, clothes, jewellery, ornaments, beasts, small models of boats or ceremonial carts, weapons and frequently humans. In the war against the Romans, the swamps were considered a useful place to get rid of prisoners of war or selected criminals. Even the sophisticated cultures of the Celts and Germans continued the customary sacrifice to the swamp dwellers, however much their gods (ideals) were concerned with loftier realms. When 'sinners' were sacrificed, their hair was cropped very short (which gives the recovered swamp corpses an innocent, almost juvenile look) while the bodies were tied into a foetal position, much like the ᛈ rune. In this state the sacrifice could be returned into the deep much like it had come from the womb. In the older Futhorc, the swamp was symbolized by the Eihwaz rune. In the sixteen rune Futhorc, the swamp became mixed up with the sacred yew grove (both ideas imply sanctuaries closely connected with death and danger) and was symbolized by the yr rune.

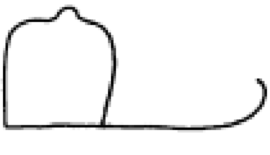
Caves and dolmens. They symbolize the unity of womb and tomb. Caves are the oldest religious sites known to us. The cave is inside and yet outside the known world, a transition phase in a journey leading both ways. Caves were rarely used for living, though there is plenty of evidence indicating settlement very close to them. Most of our dawn-age knowledge comes from caves. Indeed dawn-age art stood few chances of surviving in open places. The distribution of certain beasts and symbols in various cave rooms seems to indicate they were used for special purposes. The big hall in Lascaux seems to have been a public power-site, whereas the small room with the en-tranced, bird-headed sorcerer above the chasm seems to be more concerned with the mysteries of death and rebirth. The sorcerer, the dying European buffalo (with spilling guts) and the woolly rhino that has just dropped its manure (note the characteristic position of the tail) above the opening to the deep, have successfully confused several generations of scientists. To simulate the psychological effect of the cave, the megalith people invented the dolmen (Bretonic: 'table-stone'). The dolmen consists of a low-lying entrance, a long passage with a low ceiling (either the megalith people were smaller than we are, or they wanted to make people stoop) and a slight curve (at the bend, we usually encounter a stone particularly rich in quartzite) leading to a large, round chamber. Sometimes there are one or two small rooms to the sides of the passage. Several Bretonic dolmens have small windows that allow the sun's rays to enter the sanctuary and to illuminate special symbols in accordance to the time of the year. Bretonic dolmens contain many abstract symbols, most of which are too obscure for easy interpretation. These symbols were deeply cut into the rock (the eternal) and coloured on ritual occasions (the temporal). One of the more frequently found symbols is attributed to the earth-mother.





Symbols from Locmariaquer and the gulf of Morbihan

The largest of these is the symbol from Mané Ruthual (428cm x 321cm) where it is carved into the ceiling, pointing more or less to the north west. This 'gate-symbol' can be used for astral projection. The journey to the 'other world' is described by the following symbol from the dolmen of Petit Mont, where a way is leading to and from the gate. The symbol, like the dolmen itself, expresses three phases: entrance, passage, exit. This may parallel the pattern of the journey: universe A, in-between-ness, universe B. Dolmens were built to last for eternity, so that the journey can still be made. The feminine idea (womb) was balanced by the Menhir (Bretonic; 'standing stone') with its phallic symbolism. Not all periods produced such sophisticated dolmen structures found in Brittany. The dolmens of north Germany, Denmark and southern Scandinavia are younger than the Bretonic, and consist of a simple chamber with a short entrance. Few symbols can be found in them. The ceremonial dolmen-temple of the early megalith period (around 4000 BC) was soon replaced with the conventional barrow grave. The ritual meaning of the structure was forgotten and the stone chambers were used to bury chieftains and other individuals of questionable importance. Celtic and Germanic tribes attributed the dolmens to giants (big people to build with big stones) or the dwarves (the ceiling was rather low, after all) and imitated the form (a burial mound) to bury their own chiefs. Barrow graves were not only built for nobles, but also near the battlefields for fallen warriors. Many of these contained gifts for the dead. This attracted grave-robbers. Most barrow graves were plundered at some time. They remain. as half-collapsed mounds, containing disturbed bones and often a very angry protection spirit. A group of damaged mounds can produce a very gloomy atmosphere, if you want to practise nearby, try to come to terms with the spirits of the place first.



Sea and islands can be considered a realm of the fluid, uncertain and transcendental. In the old cultures, people believed that the earth floats in the sea like a child in the womb. Jormungandr, the Midgard serpent, divided the outer and inner realms of that vast ocean, not so much to keep the people inside but to exclude the forces of chaos and the numerous exiled giants living among the stars. To journey over the ocean meant to commit oneself to an alien realm. Etymologically, the word 'soul' ('seele' in German) is related to the word sea ('see' in German), which may suggest a vague memory of womb consciousness. Tacitus tells us of an island in the North Sea where the Nerthus-cult celebrated its rituals. Nerthus (feminine) may be an earlier form of the Vanish god Njord. There are indications that the 'Njord' figure came out of a matriarchal society. *Lokasenna* 33 has him speaking for the freedom of women to select their lovers, while Loki's reply suggests customs known from sexual magick. In other countries Njord was called Nodens, Nydd, Lydd or Llyr. In Holland and the Friesian islands, the deity of the oceans was called Nehallenia, and represented as a woman holding a fruit basket with a ship and a dog. The Romans sacrificed to her before sailing to Britain. Spanuth has attempted to show that the island of Nerthus was identical with the 'king's island' Abalus/Basileia mentioned in the Atlantis texts. Abalus shows some similarity to the Celtic 'sunken paradise' Avalon/Affalon (apple island), to the Cornish legend of the drowned land Lyonesse or the Bretonic tale of Ys, sunk for the crimes and blasphemies of her priests. Spanuth attempts to show that 'Abalus' was identical with the sacred isle of the Friesians, an island dedicated to Forsites, god of the oceans, who appears in the *Edda* as Forseti, son of Nanna and Balder (see *Gylfaginning* 32 and *Grimnismal* 15). Forseti, literally the 'one who sits before the assembly' i.e. chairperson, is a god of justice and lawgiving. There is a curious tale of twelve sailors adrift on the ocean. They appear to have lost their home country and were floating aimlessly when one appeared among them (the thirteenth) who could direct their course through the sea. He revealed to them an island, fertile and green, and gave them a couple of laws. As the ship reached the land he hurled an axe into the ground and disappeared. Consequently the island was named after him Forsitesland, and became a religious sanctuary. In a later version of the tale, the sailors were law-speakers expelled from Germany as they had not acknowledged the reign of Charlemagne with proper enthusiasm. Another name of the island was 'Farra', which means 'cattle island' and may refer to the Fehu rune. Forsitesland appears in numerous chronicles. The isle lay close to the cliffs of Helgoland (the holy land), which still exists. The cliffs with their characteristic red, black and white stones, are mentioned by Plato as landmarks. 'Farra' was sunk around 1200 BC. Parts of it reappeared in historical times and were described by the Greek geographer Marcellus who related them to Atlantis, and by a number of Christian missionaries who describe the island's appearance and the rituals held for Forsites. Between 1200-1300 the last remnants of Forsitesland vanished once more under the waves. That 'Farra' is fairly identical with the Platonic 'Atlantis' has been demonstrated by Spanuth's overwhelming researches. Believers in an earlier, volcanic Atlantis may find solace in the question, where the twelve sailors who founded Farra would have come from. The tale of that north-sea civilization may have influenced Homer's account of the island of the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey*. There are plenty of similarities between the Platonic description and the Homerian version.

There is a tale speaking of an island of glass which can be found in nearly all countries around the north sea. 'Glass' is a word older than the material we associate with it. In the old days it used to mean 'amber'. Amber was highly treasured by the mediterranean civilizations who imported huge amounts of it from the north sea. Abalus was the source of this mineralized tree-resin. The glass temple is mentioned vaguely in the *Hyndluliod* and in the Celtic legends. A curious poem called 'The Spoiling of Annwn' tells how Arthur raided the four-sided castle to obtain the cauldron of inspiration (a Pagan prototype of the holy grail). This castle, called 'Caer Sidi' (revolving castle), 'Caer Pedryvan' (four cornered castle) and 'Caer Wydyr' (glass castle), 'Caer Vedwyd' (castle of revelry), 'Caer Golud' (castle of riches) is considered to be identical with Annwn (the Celtic underworld) and is found on an island in the ocean. Apparently the journey to 'Caer Pedryvan, in the isle of the strong door, where twilight and pitchy darkness meet together and bright wine is the drink of the host' was not completely successful.

> The first word from the cauldron, when was it spoken?
> By the breath of nine maidens it was gently warmed.
> Is it not the cauldron of the chief of Annwn?
> What is its fashion?
> A rim of pearls is round its edge.
> It will not cook the food of a coward or one forsworn.
> A sword flashing bright will be raised to him,
> and left in the hand of Lleminawg.
> And before the door of the gate of the cold place
> The lamp was burning when we went with Arthur - a splendid labour!
> Except seven, none returned from Caer Vedwyd.
>
> Taliesin (translated by Squire)

The tale of wondrous islands that are drowned by the ocean usually combines historic examples with the archetypal motif. We need not insist on any specific location for Atlantis, Avalon, Abalus, Anoeth and Oeth (note the similarity to the name of Njord's home 'Noatuan'), Ys, R'lyeh or R'lin K'ren A'a when the theme of the myth is such a common one. There may have been several such island civilizations, and maybe the megalith religion was spread from there. These legends usually have a common essence. The civilization they describe is considered rich, highly developed and in league with the worst demons of the dawn ages. From these mysterious islands sailors spread networks of trade to all coasts of Europe, creating a series of colonies, radiating a new and yet age old religion, the only surviving form of Ancient Ones worship in Europe... but this is simply dreaming. We will never know these things for certain, and every magician is invited to dream, remember and imagine as s/he wills.

In some shamanic religions, we find the journey to the underworld paralleled by a journey across the ocean. In Scandinavia there are a number of megalith cult places in the form of a long ship. These ship-forms were obtained by placing a double row of big, flat stone slabs upright in the ground. Presumably these stone-ships were used much as certain north-American shamans celebrate their group journeys in the 'spirit canoe'. This practice is related in M. Harner's *Way of the Shaman*. Another magical ship is mentioned in the prose *Edda* (*gylf.* 43), 'Skidbladnir', big enough to carry all the gods and yet small enough to be folded up like cloth and be carried in a bag. Another use of the 'journey across the sea' is the fire burial. The union of fire and water is clearly described in the account of Balder's funeral. A combination of the fire and boat theme can be found in the Kenaz rune. On the island of Lundy in the Bristol channel is an ancient Christian cemetery containing the ancient gravestones of SS Patrick and Vortigern - it too is ship shaped.

It is vital for the rune magician to gain a genuine understanding of the faces and moods of nature. As the rune current flows through the body, height and depth, the three aspects of being are joined and the practitioner relates to the land in a subtle mode of communication. This understanding arises not through intellectual insight but through a feeling of unity, 'opening up' and embracing the world. Landscape is not the only variable in our experiments. Other factors are weather, time, season, lunar phases and so on. A diary is an important tool. It improves recall and observation, and allows us to cultivate a certain form of continuous awareness that far surpasses the meaning of the experiences we record. There are several methods of practical geomancy. Dowsing and pendulum application are fairly well known, and there is plenty of literature which will give you more data than you will ever need.

Another fashionable technique is called 'ley hunting'. Ley (field) lines come in two varieties. One is the 'natural' ley line, which is more or less identical with the dragon lines that follow the shape of the land. The other is a more abstract phenomenon that can be discovered by the use of a good map and a ruler. Using the map we mark all sites that can be of interest, old shrines, wells, sacred trees, ruins of old churches or castles, hill tops and the like. Note that both the Roman army and the Christian church loved to occupy Pagan cult places. The stones of several hundred ancient dolmens were incorporated in monasteries and castles in northern Germany, and no doubt the situation was not different in many other countries. Using a ruler, you may try to find straight lines that integrate several such power-places. Special consideration should be given to places on mountaintops, which may have been used for signal fires. When you find more than four power spots on a straight line, you may have discovered a ley line. Be sure to use a large scale map and a very fine pencil, then go and check.

There are a couple of imagination exercises to develop sensitivity for geomantic phenomena. These practices are meant for people who have had a solid training in meditation. One of them consists of transforming oneself into a tree. If you have found a site you wish to learn about you should first calm yourself to reach a measure of inner peace and silence. Stand with your feet together, the arms hanging relaxed at your sides, eyes closing slowly. Allow your mind to grow silent and empty. Breath should flow easily with no effort or strain. As you embrace silence and simplicity, let go of your human identity. Feel how your feet and legs become a single pillar, and allow them to turn into roots. Let the roots reach downward into the deep, rich, silent earth. Feel the transport water and nourishment, feel them embrace the soil, the stones and rocks that dream in darkness. As you drink of the dark and the deep, feel how the bark encloses you. Strong rugged tree bark, layer upon layer like silence wrapped around the central core. Winds flow around the surface skin, yet there is restful emptiness inside. Branches and twigs reach upwards, spreading into the height of heaven, adorned with foliage or naked according to the season. As breath moves slowly through the tree you feel the sap move under the bark, and as the wind sings in the leaves you feel your body swaying slowly in the breeze. With practice, the transformation will be easy and natural. You will come to understand how trees live in the yearly round. How they retreat deep down in winter time, how freshness and expectation rise in spring, how summer has them drowsing in the sunlight and how autumn is celebrated in a last outburst of flaming exhilarated joy giving way to the dreams of the dark season. Then there are the sensations of the moontides and the feeling of communication that flows among trees and joins the forest as a whole.

A similar practice is suitable for the warm season. Lie down on a blanket and descend into a half-sleep (alpha) state. Simply merge the body with the earth until your flesh has become an outgrowth of the soil, and the ground itself part of your being. This practice makes the self 'atmospheric', expanding the limits of body to receive the full flow of being. By becoming one with the earth, surprising insights may arise, reflections of other ages and new modes of being.

More difficult are practices which allow you to merge into night and nothingness. Maat magick offers a similar method. Here we settle down, relax, go into trance, and then imagine how our skin stretches out, expands, and outfolds into the world until the entire scenery has become an extension of the body. 'Lust of Result' is is anathema to these experiments. Do as you will, not for any specific result but for the rightness of the doing. Analysis or evaluation should come after the practice. . . above all, do not struggle for conclusions and certainties. While in action, we should suspend judgment, belief and disbelief. It is useful to begin and end such meditations with a few ritual motions. If we begin them with a little ritual, we may find it easier to clear the mind from the usual everyday nonsense that occupies our weary thoughts. If we end them with a little ritual activity, we will find it easier to return to human consciousness and functionality. The ritual ending of each session should help us to remember that we willed to be human, and that our contribution to the all-consciousness of this planet is human awareness.

11

Runes And Qabala

There have been a number of attempts to relate the various rune systems to the qabalistic system of the Hebrew/Egyptian/Sumerian tradition. In both systems, each letter, sound and symbol can be related to a certain type of consciousness. In the qabalistic systems each letter of the alphabet corresponds to a number, colour and path on the 'Tree of Life', not to mention divine names, god-forms, beasts, plants, stones, symbols, magical weapons, classes of being, parts of the anatomy etc. The word 'qabala' (QBL) means 'a message or teaching from God', i.e. a language by which God (all-self) may speak with us, and vice versa. (We are speaking of qabala in an unorthodox sense in this chapter. Where the term is used it is meant to imply the innovative qabalistic methods as taught by such authors as Crowley, Grant, Regardie, Fortune etc., not the thoroughly abstract teachings of orthodox qabala with its notorious lack of practical applications.) The language of QBL uses certain words, signs, symbols and alignments to speak to levels of the mind which would not react to normal suggestions or prayers. The language of reason cannot even touch these levels, but a language of seemingly irrational symbols can do so very well. In a certain sense, the runes are a 'qabalistic' system. We may speak with the height or depth of ourselves by using runes, and, using the same language, receive meaningful answers. This phenomena is essential to magick and divination. Divination permits us to receive images from levels of consciousness inaccessible to our 'everyday self', and magick uses the same images to influence and change this 'everyday self' and its reality; QBL, in short, is communication.

To the novice, of course, things do look a little different. Working one's way into a qabalistic system usually implies endless hours of study and meditation, getting acquainted with absurd theories, bizarre names and overwhelming lists of more or less obscure relationships between symbols of all varieties. After a time, however, the teaching does begin to make sense in its own crazy way and from that point unfolds meaning and creates and re-interprets the 'new world', the magical universe. Once this process has begun, QBL can be used to produce valid psychological changes under will.

For example: A rune magician who realizes that s/he lacks, say, power, drive and determination may try to improve the situation by concentrating on the practice of such runes as Fehu, Sowelu, Thurisaz, Teiwaz. S/he might aid healing by creating an amulet which combines these glyphs, or by travelling through these and similar rune tunnels, so that the frustrations, inhibitions and restrictions are cleared up 'from within'. The qabalistic magician would solve the trouble in a very similar way, even if different symbols were used. S/he would invoke the spheres of Geburah, (power), attributed to the planet mars, and Tiphareth (beauty), which corresponds to the sun, and the heart centre of consciousness. For this purpose the temple might be decorated in red (mars) and gold (sun), as might be the personal clothing. There could be six (sun) red (mars) candles on the altar, as well as a wand and a sword. The proper divine names would be intoned, sharp and hot food would be eaten, warm red wine be drunk, there could be wild and martial music and perhaps a spontaneous dance with the sword. In either case, consciousness is flooded with the highly concentrated essence of the energy/experience desired, until the practitioner feels easy and natural with it and has forgotten all his previous lack of energy. Similar tactics can be used to heal most psychological defects. Properly applied, QBL is not a philosophy but a system of practical consciousness-engineering. The interested reader will find plenty of useful data in Israel Regardie's *Tree of Life*, Dion Fortune's *Mystical Qabala* and in Aleister Crowley's *777* or *Magick*.

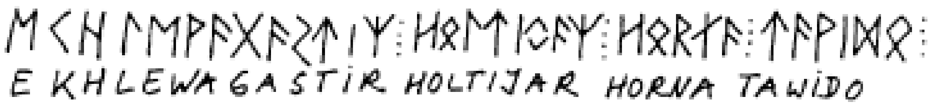
It should be obvious by now that each and every religion has developed its own 'qabala' language. Even in monotheistic religions this phenomena is found. Observe the myriads of highly specialized 'saints' with their specific symbols, attributes, totem beasts etc., in, say, Christianity or orthodox Buddhism. Similar systems exist all over the world, often with great similarities between them. Differences arise out of local conditions. Some religions have fairly simple systems of ordering the world, while others, such as the Chinese system, have developed into fantastic complexity in the millennia of their evolution. In all qabalistic systems we find the attribution of certain symbols to certain states of consciousness. Much of the original rune-qabala has been destroyed or forgotten during the persecution times. Consequently, attempts to relate the rune-order or the Germanic/Celtic gods to existing systems of QBL (astrology, tarot, I-Ching, numerology or whatever) have failed for the sheer lack of reliable material. Such mixtures may be of personal value (individual insight) but cannot be verified with the existing historical data. This is especially the case when the cultural context of the joined systems differs. If we attempt to relate the rune signs to the tarot, for instance, we will soon come to the realization that both systems, though complete and balanced in themselves, describe different visions of reality. As the habitat of the magician differs, so does the scope of possible experience and the psychological realities that relate to it. The near Eastern/North African systems include experiences of heat, desert, dryness and scorching sunlight which would seem rather strange to the rain-drenched, arthritic sorcerer from Northern Europe. Similarly the Egyptian priesthood would have had little sympathy for the beauties of hail, fog or the howl of the snowstorm. Both traditions have similar aims (will) and similar tools (the human mind). Their difference comes from culture, climate, geographic conditions, mentality, way of life and the uniqueness of each individual consciousness.

For example most mythological traditions attribute certain beasts to the ideas of 'death'. Such beasts devour the corpse and carry the deceased into the 'otherworld'. In Egyptian religion this function is symbolized by such deities as Anubis, the jackal; Sebek Mako the crocodile, or the vulture of Maat, who leaves but bones, the 'naked truth', behind. In Paleolithic periods, wild dogs and hyenas symbolized this idea. None of these beasts lived in the cold north. Instead, we find Wodan accompanied by two ravens and two wolves, suitable representatives of death and transcendence, or the Morrigu flapping over the battlefield in the mask of a carrion crow. In Oceania death is symbolized by the divine shark. The symbols may differ, the basic idea remains the same.

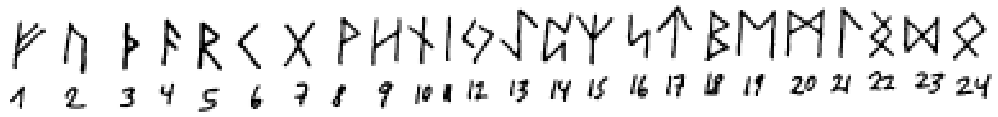
Where I attribute certain symbols to certain realities I consider these as suggestions not facts. True understanding of the runes comes from life, not merely from study, and years of development have to go into it. Your idea of each rune will change repeatedly in this process, as the system is infinite and so are you. There are no shortcuts, no 'instant oracle practices', no methods to 'transform the world in ten easy lessons by correspondence'. If you are successful in your practice, this will be the result of involvement, commitment and dedication. As you change, so will your vision of the world. One of the advantages of the runes is their capacity to stimulate the imagination. Even the most narrow-minded historian is apt to arrive at all kinds of bizarre interpretations without even realizing it.

Neither the Celtic nor the Germanic priesthood had much faith in the use of scripture and theory. The required knowledge was memorized, usually in a state of light trance and in rhymed form. Many of the songs in the *Edda* are catalogues of information, such as the 'Grimnismal', 'Alvismal', 'Voluspa', etc., and some of them have stored memories from the Ice ages and earlier periods. A form of 'natural selection' keeps such memories up to date, for as the study of mnemonic technique shows, the mind does not remember what it is not interested in.

One of the qabalistic techniques is called 'gematria', and is used to transform the letters of the alphabet into numbers. Words that produce the same number are supposed to be related to one another, or to contain a shared, if hidden essence. To find this essence, and to balance seemingly paradoxical ideas, is one of the tasks of qabalistic meditation. There are indications that a similar system of rune-gematria did once exist. Heinz Klingenberg has demonstrated this fact in his interpretation of the famous gold horns from Gallehus, Jutland. (See illustration). The two Gallehus horns were found buried in some Danish fields. Probably they were originally buried as sacrificial gifts or to hide them. Their age is highly disputed between 100 BC and 500 as is the question of their cultural origin. The numerous bizarre figures shown on them cannot be satisfactorily explained by any known mythology, though there are dozens of scientific theories that attempt to do so. In 1802 the horns were stolen from Copenhagen museum and immediately melted-down by the thieves. A number of fairly exact drawings survived, one of the horns had a runic inscription:



Compare with the illustration. Note that the last word is worked in a different style of writing. The inscription is usually translated as 'I Hlewagastir Holtijar made the horn'. ('Tawido' means 'to do', 'to make'). Klingenberg tried to interpret this inscription with gematria. Using a common 24-rune futhorc, he assigned a number to each rune.



(This is one of the common 24 rune rows. Of course there are variations, especially in the positions of the last runes.)
The inscription contains four groups of rune signs.

A) EKHLEWAGASTIR⁝
19 6 9 21 19 8 4 7 4 16 17 11 15 13 runes, sum = 156.

B) HOLTIJAR⁝
9 24 21 17 11 12 4 15 8 runes, sum = 113.

C) HORNA⁝
9 24 5 10 4 5 runes, sum = 52

D) TAWIDO⁝
17 4 8 11 23 24 6 runes, sum = 87.

The inscription consists of 32 runes and 16 dots. The runes form 13 syllables. Of the 24 possible rune letters, 16 are used, plus the sign of the dot. Now there are some regularities in these numbers. 156 = 12 x 13. 52 = 4 x 13.

Add group
A + ⁝ + B = 273 = 21 x 13 (⁝ = 4)
B + ⁝ + C = 169 = 13 x 13.
C + ⁝ + D = 143 = 11 x 13
D + ⁝ + A = 247 = 19 x 13.

Note that

A + B = 21 runes.
B + C = 13 runes.
C + D = 11 runes.
D + A = 19 runes.

16 rune letters are used, plus the dot sign.

A	R	K	G	W	H	N	I	J	R	S	T	E	L	D	O
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	17	19	21	23	24

= 207 + . = 208 = 16 x 13.

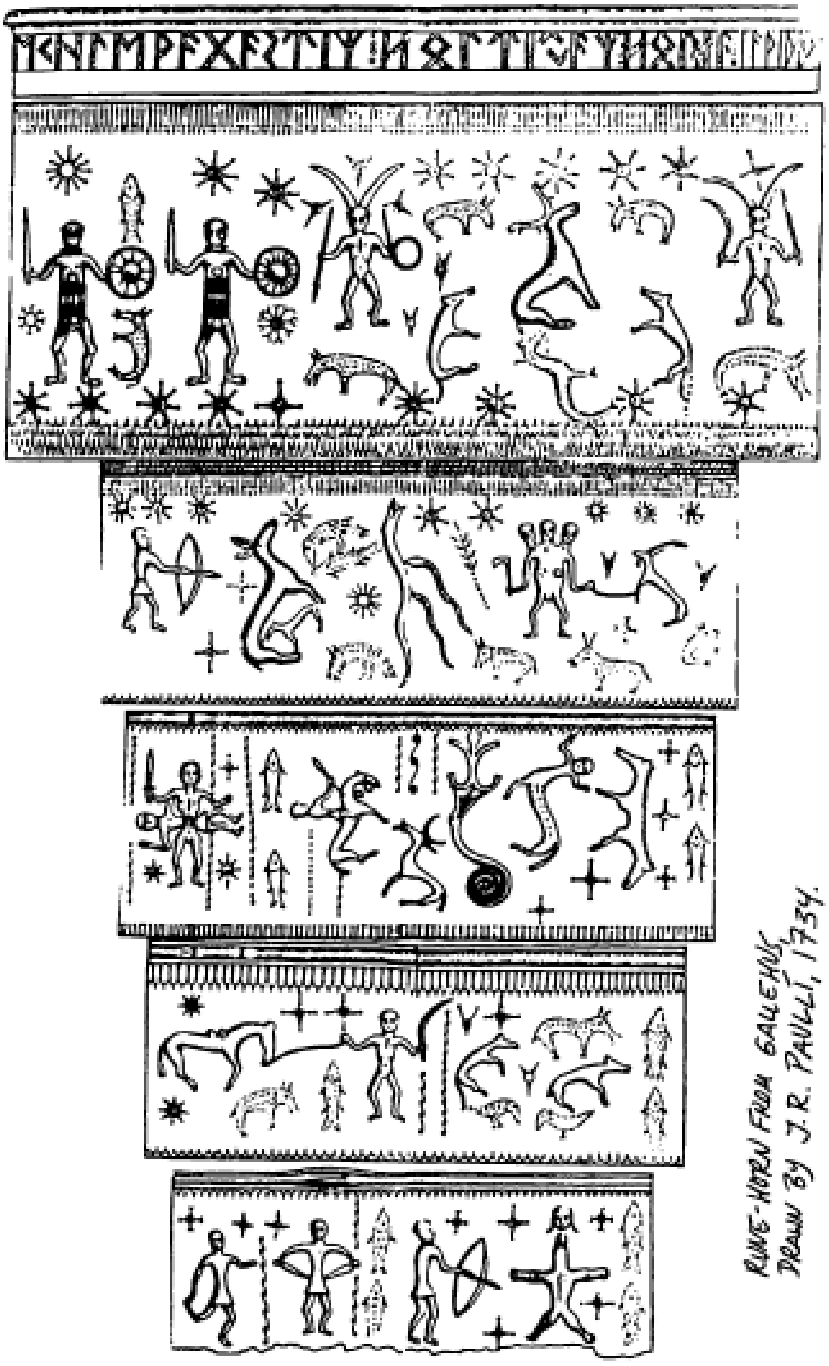
These consist of six vowels

A	W	I	J	E	O	=	78
4	8	11	12	19	24	=	6 x 13

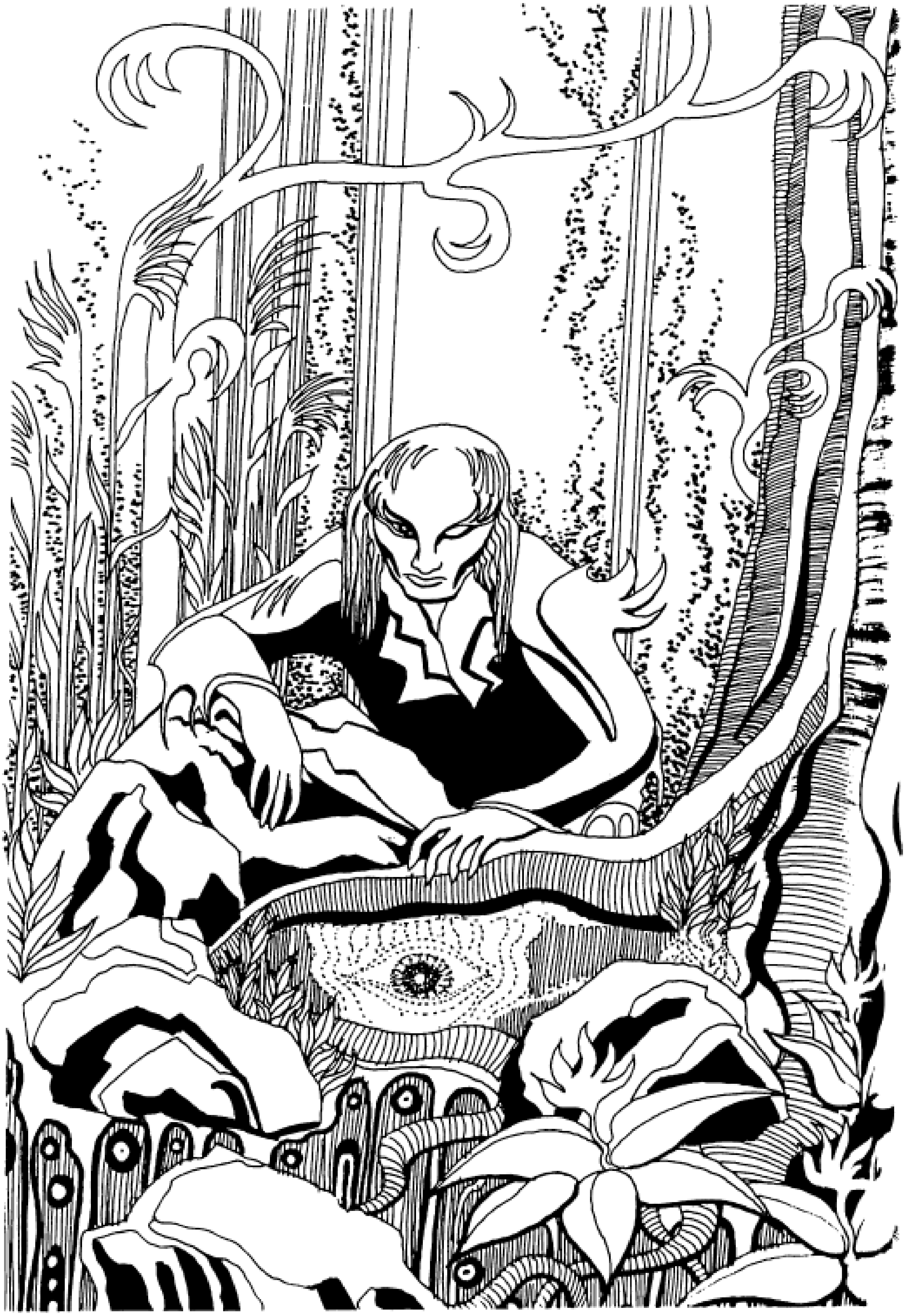
And of 10 consonants plus the dot sign

R	K	G	H	N	'R'	S	T	L	D		
5	6	7	9	10	15	16	17	21	23	=	129 + . = 130 = 13 x 10.

Whatever this may be it is not coincidence. What is the meaning of the 13? Thirteen has not always been an 'evil' or 'unlucky' number. The 13 appears prominently in some of the earliest nature religions and is closely connected to the lunar calendar. There are 13 full moons every other year, and if we consider the connection between the moon and menstruation, we come to understand the importance of the number to cultures who were possibly organized in a matricentristic way. Remember the importance of blood red colour to rune magick! On the magnificent stone stele from Laussel we observe a woman holding a horn. There are 13 notches in that horn. Note that the curve of the horn shape is already suggestive of the moon sickle. The Stele of Laussel is dated between 20,000 and 15,000BC. With the advent of patriarchal religion the phenomena of menstruation came to be considered 'dirty' and 'unclean', 'thirteen' was considered an 'unlucky' number and the use of body fluids (from either sex) was replaced with the use of sacrificial blood in ritual practice. The Gallehus horns indicate the existence of at least one gematric system in rune magick. Of course we do not know what individual meaning was attributed to each number, nor how widespread the system has been. As any occultist knows, there are as many systems of numerology as sand at the seaside. In the predictable scholarly fashion, Klingenberg wrote a whole book trying to organize each and every item on the Gallehus horns in groups of thirteen. Maybe there were really 65 stars (5 x 13) in 13 different types with a sum of 117 rays (9 x 13) involved in the design, yet how accurate are the drawings that we base our research on? Without the originals, such claims can hardly be verified. It remains to future generations of rune magicians to decode the surviving rune texts if possible, with the help of a computer.



RUNE-HORN FROM GALLEHUS, DRAWN BY J.R. PAULLI, 1734.



12

Vision And Crisis

Veit ek at ek hêkk	I know how I hung
vindga meiethâ	from the windswept tree
nætr allar nîu	for nine long nights
geiri unethaethr	pierced by the spear
ok geethinn Ôethni	given to Odin
Sialfr sialfum mer	myself to myself
A theim meiethi	from the branch of the tree
er mangi veit	of which nobody knows
hvers hann af rôtum, renn	from which root it has grown.
Vieth hleifi mik seldu	They offered me neither
nê vieth hornigi	bread nor drink
nŷsta ek niethr	then I bent over
nam ek upp rûnar	took up the runes
œpandi nam	took them up screaming
fêll ek aptr thaethan	and fell to the ground.
(...)	(...)
Tha nam ek frævask	Then I recovered
Ok vaxa ok vel hafask	began to think
Ok frôethr vera	grew and felt well
Oreth mer af ôrethi	word out of word
Ôreths leitaethi	gave word to me
Verk mer af verki	work out of work
Verks leitaethi	gave work to me.

Rûnar munt thu finna	Runes shalt thou find
Ok raethnix stafi	and staffs of advice
miök stôra stafi	very strong staffs
miök stinna stafi	very mighty staffs
er fâethi fimbulthulr	coloured by fimbuthulr (Odin)
ok görethu ginnregin	given by the great gods
ok reist hroptr rögna	and carved by the highest of regents.

(from the *Havamal* 139-43)

These lines from the 'Havamal' describe how Odin came to discover the magick of the runes. 'Initiation on the world-tree' reflects a shamanic custom that has been in use for millennia and is still practised in several traditions. The 'tree of life', be it as Yggdrasil, Laerad, Mimameithr, be it as the world pillar (north axis) Yrminsul, be it as a model of the human spine with its energy centres, connects all worlds and all dimensions. The young shaman climbs this world-tree in order to receive his or her vision between the worlds of heaven and of earth. A magnificent example of this practice is given in Michael Oppitz's book and documentary movie 'Shamans of the blind country' which deals with the shamanic tradition of Nepal. After days of exhaustive preparations, purifications, ceremonies and endless dances the young shaman is led to a 'tree of life' erected in the centre of the village. This 'tree' is especially prepared for the occasion; the bark has been stripped off and white cloth ('against witches') hangs from the few branches remaining at the top. A little platform has been built half way up the stem.

The candidate, in this case a young woman, has participated in so many dances to and from the village that she is by this time almost delirious. She wears a heavy 'armour' of headpiece, ornaments and special clothing adorned with cowrie shells, animal skins, feathers, bells of all varieties and a generous amount of ironware, some 14 kilos altogether. At the height of the ceremony her eyes are blindfolded and the pulsing heart of a sacrificial goat is shoved into her mouth. Then she is helped up the tree where she remains standing on the platform while all the shamans of the neighbouring villages dance around the pole. As the shamans circle the tree they repeatedly change direction. If the candidate above them moves in unity with them this is a good omen. Her 'human consciousness' has been thoroughly dissolved by then, her body quivers and convulses, obsessed by the spirits that will aid her healing work. Like all of her vocation, she has become the living representative of the mythical first shaman Rama Puran Tsan.

The same formula - initiation through crisis and ecstasies - can be observed in Odin's experience on the tree. We should not mistake Odin's rune initiation with the usual instances of suffering and martyrdom. Odin and Christ may both experience important similar events up on the tree or cross; this does not change the fact that the reasons and results of their transformation differ considerably. To Christ, death on the cross implies the culmination of a holy lifetime in a gesture of sacrifice and suffering. To Odin, the nine nights on the tree are but the beginning of the magick to be. The suffering of Odin is undergone for a purpose, voluntarily, and this purpose transcends the meaning of pain. To the Pagan mind, the exhaustion and pain undergone during initiation are but technical aids to achieve a certain state of consciousness. Christianity, on the other hand, starts out with the absurd idea that the flesh is sinful, and finds fulfillment in its punishment, the act of suffering being the height of holiness itself.

We should realize that exhaustion and suffering are keys to dissolution, which may lead to transcendence provided that conditions are right. Without this element of will, suffering becomes an exercise in masochism. There is no special grace in giving one's life for others, or enduring torture for some noble idea. Where pain is experienced, the purpose of this pain lies in shattering the normal human limits of consciousness, releasing what has hitherto been dormant and repressed. 'Pain' is just one tool for this purpose, and not even the most efficient one. Exhaustion is far better, be it through dance, hunger, isolation, physical strain, art, music, laughter or sex. As Austin Spare had it, 'there is no need for crucifixion.'

The purpose of exhaustion lies in dissolving identity and opening the mind for the glory to be. If pain occurs, and is experienced as such, the whole operation fails through the negative conditioning it creates. In the state of absolute exhaustion time seems to stop and the 'eternal now' reveals itself to us. Out of the in-between-ness (life/death) the new gestalt may flower and a new way of life arise out of the vacuum. In this fashion the novice dies and the shaman is born. In magical literature the transformative process of 'life, death, rebirth' is referred to as the 'formula of IAO'. 'I' stands for Isis, and symbolizes growth and fresh development. 'A' for Apophis/Set, symbolizing crisis, obstruction, frustration. 'O' for Osiris resurrected from the dead. This formula, which should be studied in the works of Aleister Crowley, describes the flow of evolution, learning and development. The pattern repeats itself time and time again, a spiral flow that has to be lived in order to be understood. The crucial point is our behaviour during crisis. To the magician, crisis offers freedom from habit and a chance to change. There is no final stage to this process, as life and change are continuous. 'IAO' is a formula that reflects solar 'life-death-rebirth' symbolism. We find the formula suggested in the shape of the ᛋ rune: ᛁ growth, 1 obstruction, ᛋ fresh growth. We all die and are reborn continuously. The babe had to die to permit the child to live, the child died to attain youth, the youth was slain in order to become adult and so on. As we live and die, our values, desires and needs transform. The more one struggles to avoid change and dissolution, the harder will the crisis be. All has to change, and if it doesn't change voluntarily it will be changed by force.

The magician changes much faster than most people do, and soon learns to embrace crisis and dissolution with a laugh. His or her problems come from the question of 'right measure'/balance in motion. How much crisis/dissolution are needed? If you believe that 'more pain equals more enlightenment' you will suffer for that delusion. It's not our conscious mind's decision how much crisis is needed. If we are sufficiently honest with ourselves we will get exactly what we need - usually a little bit more than we dreamed necessary, and a little bit less than we dreamed possible. To avoid crisis or to indulge in it are typical beginners' problems. We need not imagine that a single crisis will solve our problems once and for all. The 'abyss' will be encountered again and again. People who believe that they have come 'through the abyss' show all too clearly that they have simply lost their way in it. A touch of crisis is often useful to break the dominance of identity and to open the gates to the deep. This is the reason why Austin Spare emphasized the use of vacuity and the 'death posture' as vital conditions for the consecration of sigils.

How much crisis is needed to open the gates? It depends on how much ego and self-importance you have. A magician who habitually re-forms mask and identity can easily open up, while an ego-centered pompous ritualist of the medieval tradition needs endless periods of abstinence, prayer, fasting etc., to achieve the same results. The more ego you have the more effort will be needed to break its control. Such cases need fantastic amounts of ritual equipment, drastic and melodramatic gestures, months of preparation, all of which look very impressive to the novice who believes that 'more effort equals more results'. To a magician who cultivates a degree of humility, honesty and humour, things look somewhat different. If you live at the edge of reality, in the full awareness of your hungers, desires, hopes and hang-ups you will make the transition with less effort than the numerous magicians who concentrate on ego-building practices, self-importance, pride and certainty. Can you smile about yoursel - it gets too serious otherwise?

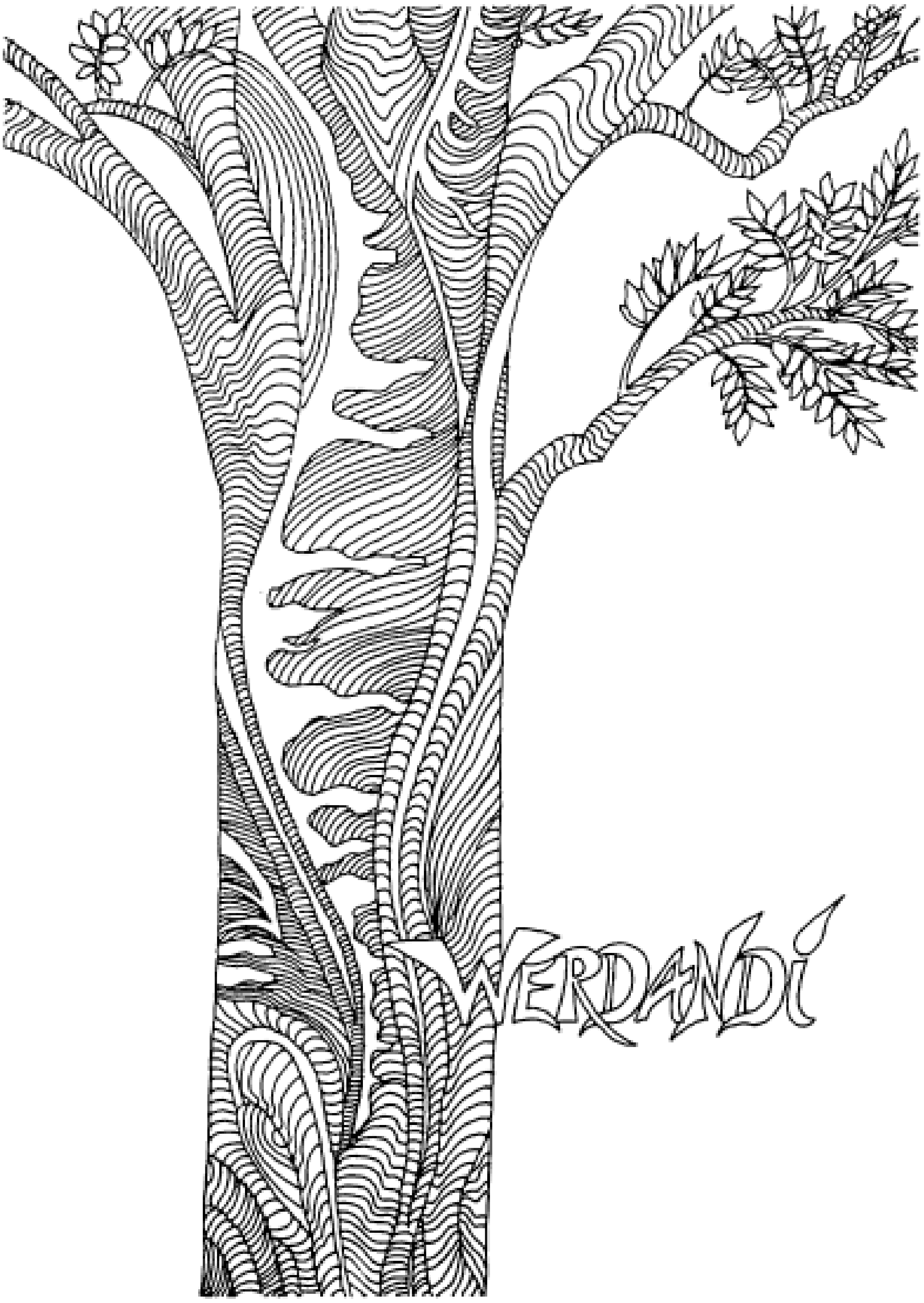
It is vital to understand that crisis and exhaustion open the gates, they do not effect the congress that takes place after that. Indeed, if you indulge in crisis for its own sake you will only produce constriction. The energy force for union is not crisis but joy. Magicians who try to energize sigils (or spells or whatever) by massive exhaustion only cause the mind to associate the sigil with strain and tension. Exhaustion should be used to open, to purify yourself from waste materials before you start to do magick. Once the vacuum has been created, exhaustion is not needed any more, indeed it will only obstruct the passage of the proper energy (self, god) which arises on its own accord, without your effort, control or involvement. First exhaustion, then vacuity then channelling through oneself.

How were the runes received?

Some authors seem to believe that Odin received one of the many futhorc alphabets in his state of enlightened dissolution, preferably the 'original' futhorc, whatever that may be. Now the mind shaken by initiation through crisis and exhaustion is in no state to receive anything as abstract, complicated and absurd as an alphabet. The exhausted mind is void and simple, and easily overwhelmed by sensation. Normal objects reveal a fantastic scope of beautiful or terrible implications, vision is vast, wide-eyed and wonderful. Had Odin seen the futhorc alphabet as we know it he would have died laughing.

What, then, was received in the timeless instant? One possibility is suggested in the chapter 21 on divination. Perhaps a method of seeing was received, vision that revealed a myriad of symbols and signs out of the growth of branches and twigs. With experience, these symbols would then be refined to a scope of basic runes. Structures which later developed into the various futhorc-alphabets. Another possibility would be a sign or a symbol that contains all possible rune shapes. Such symbols are called 'Binderunen', German for 'bound runes'. I will offer some examples and ask you to develop your own. Binderunen can be used for many sorts of magick. They can be used as a concentration focus, as parts of the altar design, as tools for divination. They can be carved on wood or bone and be used as 'magical mirrors', as described by Franz Bardon (*Initiation into Hermetics*). They are also useful for meditation practice, particularly for the cultivation of an empty mind. Practise looking into them while keeping the mind void and silent, this may teach you how to 'open up'. Strain and effort should be avoided. Simply allow your awareness to fix itself on the symbol while the mind grows silent and peaceful. Do not expect results. Simply practise dealing with the awareness flow. Learning to produce vacuity and silence 'under will' is important for the transmission of energy/consciousness between the worlds. As the ego usually struggles against silence and voidness, exhaustion is often the first act. By 'letting go' into silence, we give our suppressed selves a chance to emerge. Beyond identity, in between the worlds, in the 'void place of belief' we are free to see anew and to accept change where it is willful. In between realities, we can choose to change the world and ourselves as we will.

'Thrill with the joy of life and death!'


WERDANDI

13

Part II

Introduction To Werdandi

As has been mentioned repeatedly, rune practice involves a number of physical exercises that permit the mage to experience the form and flow of each rune in the body. These exercises have beneficial effects on body, mind and soul, they give reality to the abstractions of the symbolism, they evoke and earth the current. The postures can be used for ritual, ceremony, dance, meditation, energy work, gymnastics, to balance and heal the flow of vitality, to clear up blocked energy and to bring the idea into living flesh. Above all, they are an interesting field for practical experiment in body, energy and consciousness.

It is a sad fact that many aspiring students of the oh-so-occult arts forget the physical, the exoteric side of reality, concentrate on the refinement of the exalted spirit and the subtle forces, all the time repressing body and flesh as 'crude illusions' meant to be 'transcended'. Often the body is ignored or even damaged, be it by bookishness, too much fasting, asceticism, sexual abstinence or the blind use of will-power, and when disease, weakness, overpressure or some other 'weakness of the flesh' reveals itself, this is usually 'healed' by more concentration, more spirituality, more esoteric effort, 'acceptance of karma' and the attempt to 'think positive'. We all know occultists who look positively uneasy in their flesh, feel no delight in the senses, lack the basic lust and joy of life and live out a tepid existence of serious and dull intellectual mind-games.

Where we divide body and consciousness we are violating both. We incarnate in flesh because we willed it so. Flesh is our medium of interaction with the world. The ego or persona is the vehicle of communication between humans and need not be a prison or a trap. The very simple state of physical well-being is the basis of 'advancement' of consciousness. It is remarkable how a few simple and natural practices, so obvious and basic that few occultists ever bother to think about them, increase the sense of living within body and the universe. A healthy and happy body is capable of lust, full emotion, pleasure, delight and honesty in all experience, it feels good and radiates self and confidence to embrace the world. Without this basis of joy and energy, spiritual progress needs much more effort and discipline, provides less pleasure and more trouble. We try to work with body, not against it, and this means much more than just a measure of dutiful tolerance for a 'biological machine'. Unless we can come to see body as something positive to care for and delight in, our spiritual ambitions lack roots in reality. Not duty but pleasure should make us do our exercises. As long as you have to force yourself to move, dance, breathe, love etc., you are at war with yourself. So much for today's sermon to the unbelievers.

Have you ever wondered how body and mind influence each other? If you study the works of Wilhelm Reich you will encounter the concept of 'character armour'. Reich discovered that areas of chronic tension in the body often parallel chronic repression/neurosis in the mind, and that healing one without the other is usually impossible. According to Reich, neurosis grows where vital desires cannot be lived out, because of fear, social conditioning or lack of opportunity. Vital desires that find no fulfilment are 'stored' in chronic tension. Sexual hunger, for instance, causes a feeling of frustration in the genitals. Then the conscious mind tries to repress/ignore the troublesome awareness and tries to reduce sensitivity in the area. Muscular tension does this job, and when the trouble becomes chronic, so does the tension which is now considered an 'armour'. Israel Regardie wrote about it:

> Basically this comprises at least two elements, the psychic armour which for convenience sake may be compared with the Freudian super-ego, and muscular armour which is the sum total of all the bodily tensions of the organism. The function of the armour - whether on the psychic level or the muscular level - is to repress impulses and feelings that are not morally acceptable in terms of cultural environmental attitudes and early family training... One represses with one's body as much as with one's mind. (Introduction to Crowley's *World's Tragedy*)

Plainly, a complete therapy must equally dissolve the armour of body *and* mind. The healing of the mind requires honesty, self-knowledge, reflection, deconditioning of negative thinking, meditation and the confrontation of repressed memories, desires, dreams (opening Pandora's box). Healing of body involves the rediscovery of relaxation, joy, sheer lust, organic pulsation, energy flow, full breathing and dynamic motion. All of these are basically sexual, as is all perception and interaction of form. 'All things fornicate all of the time' wrote Austin Spare, to the disgust of the esoteric scene of his day. The discovery of body and mind in union is equally the unfolding of the repressed all-sexuality.

Sexuality is one the key problems for civilized people. Here follows a simplified synopsis of Reich's analysis of the development of bodily armour out of a repressed sexuality. In early infancy, the child learns that the genitals/anus are taboo areas. Puberty increases these troubles. Attempting to decrease sexual feeling, the hips are tensed and become 'frozen'. This effectively clogs the body's natural resource of life-energy. Belly breathing, which used to be natural becomes restricted; now the chest is burdened with the task of breathing, which it does with less efficiency and more haste. Consequently the general tone of vitality drops, which generally weakens health and gives a gloomier outlook on life. As the chest moves out, one's centre of gravity rises. The socially acceptable good posture derives from a military ideal. (Chest out, belly in, legs straight, eyes forward etc.) This effectively prevents emotion through an exoskeleton of sheer cramp. This is intentional and a vital part of the brainwashing that turns uncertain adolescent youths into obedient, soul-hardened killers. With the freezing of the hips the legs usually become tense, which in turn increases the armour of the pelvis. By now the energy flow is severely restricted by muscular tension. Soon enough the shoulders follow, cramping the neck area and cutting off the head. It is hardly surprising when such an agglomeration of chronic armour becomes insensitive, that the energy channels get blocked and the very joy of life disappears into a nightmare of duty, obligation, rules, routines, achievement orientation and the like. Sexuality itself becomes a partial release of local tension that has little to do with the rest of the body, let alone the soul. If we are honest we have to admit that we are considerably more dis-eased and constricted than we would care to realize.

Healing is not acquiring something new but to becoming conscious of the restriction and then reorganizing ourselves. This is why such simple activities as deep breathing, love play, dancing, rune practice or Kung fu (Chinese: Wu Shu) require so much work. We cannot expect to get rid of character armour, cramped posture, low vitality and morbid attitudes in a few short weeks. How surprised will you be when, in a few months, you think back to the time when you read this book and consider all the changes that the practice worked for you?

Life-energy, be it called 'rune power', 'chi', 'od[1]', 'orgone', 'prana', 'pneuma', 'vril' or whatever, can only be perceived and channelled when the major cramps have been dissolved. Many beginners complain that they do not feel anything, and try to improve the situation by forcing results. Others feel that 'something happens' and get terribly upset... people often cling to their armour, as they sense that its dissolution will certainly confront them with the feelings and desires they have evaded for years. Armour equals security to those who have found shelter and protection in it. Doing without armour means, first of all, confrontation of the repressed, accumulated pain and admission of one's vulnerability. It is remarkable how we all try to rationalize our armour, to explain it away and to endure it willingly. The armour seems to offer protection. That your armour is dispensible may be acceptable in theory, in practice it requires damned hard work, constant vigilance and repeated deconditioning of self-imposed limitations.

Rune stance practice can help us in this great work. It helps us to become aware of ourselves, to breathe, stand, sing naturally, clears blocked energy channels, increases vitality and gradually erodes the armour acquired by habit. Where resistance is reduced, the universal life-energy is free to flow and pulse through our being like water through a living sponge. In spite of the opinion of several occultists, the rune energy flow is nothing new, special or alien. The energy flows at all times of our lives; without it, we would not live at all. Rune stance practice merely improves the clarity of perception, the ability to open-up, to accept the flow of the current and to channel the energy as accords with will. We are not acquiring a new faculty but remembering an old one; what we discover is ourselves.

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[1] The name coined by Von Reichenbach for the life energy he discovered - he name it after Odin.

14

How To Proceed

The proper assumption of a rune stance (or any other posture in magick, yoga or Wu Shu) depends on a number of variables. In practice, you may encounter difficulties. No doubt you will have a measure of talent already, but that in itself may not suffice. Things begin to work when all the variables (stance, breathing, sound vibration, energy flow, imagination etc.,) have been mastered sufficiently to function in cooperation. People who expect instant results will certainly be disappointed. If you persist in practice, however, the many problems will gradually dissolve and the many separate skills fuse into a simple and natural activity. There will come a time when the whole thing seems so easy that you will wonder what the fuss was all about. To the beginner, everything seems difficult, as all the required talents have to be developed at the same time. Sorry, but that is the way it is. As you are learning through the indirect communication of a book you will have to very watchful and open minded. You will have to check, re-check and experiment a great deal, as there will not be a teacher who drives, controls and guides you. This burdens you with a lot of responsibility, you are in care of your own development, and if you want to know whether you are doing right you will have to observe yourself for an answer. Of course it is easier to learn by imitation, but then I expect that you are the sort of person who enjoys independent research.

The principles of rune stance are quite simple. You assume the form of a rune with your body. You imagine the shape of the rune into yourself, breathing deeply, you sing out its name/sound until you feel the corresponding flow of vibration, energy, sentience. This basically, is how it is done. It is not quite as easy as it sounds, but you will find that out soon enough. Our major problem, as was mentioned before, is the sorry state we are in. The average person has bad posture, chronic character armour, shallow breathing, low vitality, repressed sexuality and does not dare to sing, chant or scream loud. Apart from these minor troubles there is the vital question; 'what if it works too well?' One can easily get an overdose of energy, it is a common problem among the more determined mages. Before you begin to practise you should acquaint yourself with the chapter 18, which deals with troubles and strange symptoms. Here are some points for consideration.

- The energy flow depends on clear channels. To an extent, the energy will clear those channels up. If the channels are overly blocked through tension and armour, an increase in energy may cause problems. Whatever you do, do it gently. Do not force results.

- Health. A healthy, rested body that gets enough sleep, food, sex and activity is the best foundation. Though the advanced practitioner can work with rune posture in times of disease, weakness or crisis, this may not be easy for beginners. If you decide to learn these exercises, do it when you feel moderately well. Also, avoid practice with a full belly.

- Relaxation. All tension restricts energy, breath and flow. This goes for the chronic character armour just as for the tensions that come from lack of motion, stress or one-sided activity. Now we may dissolve such tensions through depth-meditation, self-hypnosis, or some similar tactic. This means that we use mind to relax body. We can also use body to relax body, which is often a very useful method to deal with unconscious tensions. It means, sorry, that you get up and do something.

- Physical exercise. Oh I can imagine how you sigh and curse at this, which goes to show just how deeply you need the dreaded activity. Lethargy and melancholy are often symptoms of vitality hunger, and the longer one lazes about the worse things get. Edginess, nervousness or a heated temper may come from the other extreme - excessive energy accumulation that requires activity to find release.

Here the learned witch-doctor prescribes long walks in the country and the generous use of a punch-bag. Rune stance (or most forms of meditation, for that matter) is much easier when we move around before the practice, jumping, stretching, twisting, warming up, that sort of thing.

I often start by jumping around for a few minutes, forward, backward, sideways, on one leg, running on the spot, jumping high etc. This warms the body up, increases oxygen circulation and releases a lot of tension. Then I work on the joints. Rolling the knees gently is the beginning, then follows a good session of hip rotation. The pelvis is rotated in small and wide circles, sideways, forwards and back, in irregular curves and so on. It is also moved by pushing the genitals up and down (back), this motion should come from the pelvis, without any other motion of torso or thighs. The discovery of free hip motion is absolutely essential. Most civilized people have frozen hips, even in coitus they have to move most of the torso and the upper legs as the hips cannot move independently. It is a useful practice to involve more pelvic motion into your dancing. Do not try to move the hips by letting torso and legs shift them, but instil the pelvic area with awareness and let it move on its own accord, the rest of the body following. Try it in front of a mirror. Do such motions look vulgar and obscene? Welcome! You've just met a neurotic belief that lies hidden in the armour. Loki advises that you persist in your effort, and try to look as obscene as possible. When you can do it with complete indifference or even pleasure in public, much of the armour will be gone.

Next, the shoulders are exercised. Stretch out the arms and swing them in wide circles, going very slowly. Breathe in as the arms move up, breathe out when they move down. If you go fully into the sensation you will feel freshness and joy radiate all over.

Then the neck is eased by *gentle* rotation of the head. Imagine that you have a piece of chalk perched on the tip of your nose and that with it you are trying to draw a circle on a blackboard. Sometimes this is easier when one gets down on the floor on hands and knees, in this position the hips, shoulder and neck can be exercised very fully. Try to imagine you are a cat. Stretch out the claws, move the back up and down, allow the pelvis to move in circles . . . experiment. These, and similar practices make the torso warm, fresh and flexible. Perhaps they do not look very spiritual or refined, but then, they work, and that is the vital issue.

15
Rune Stance Practice In History

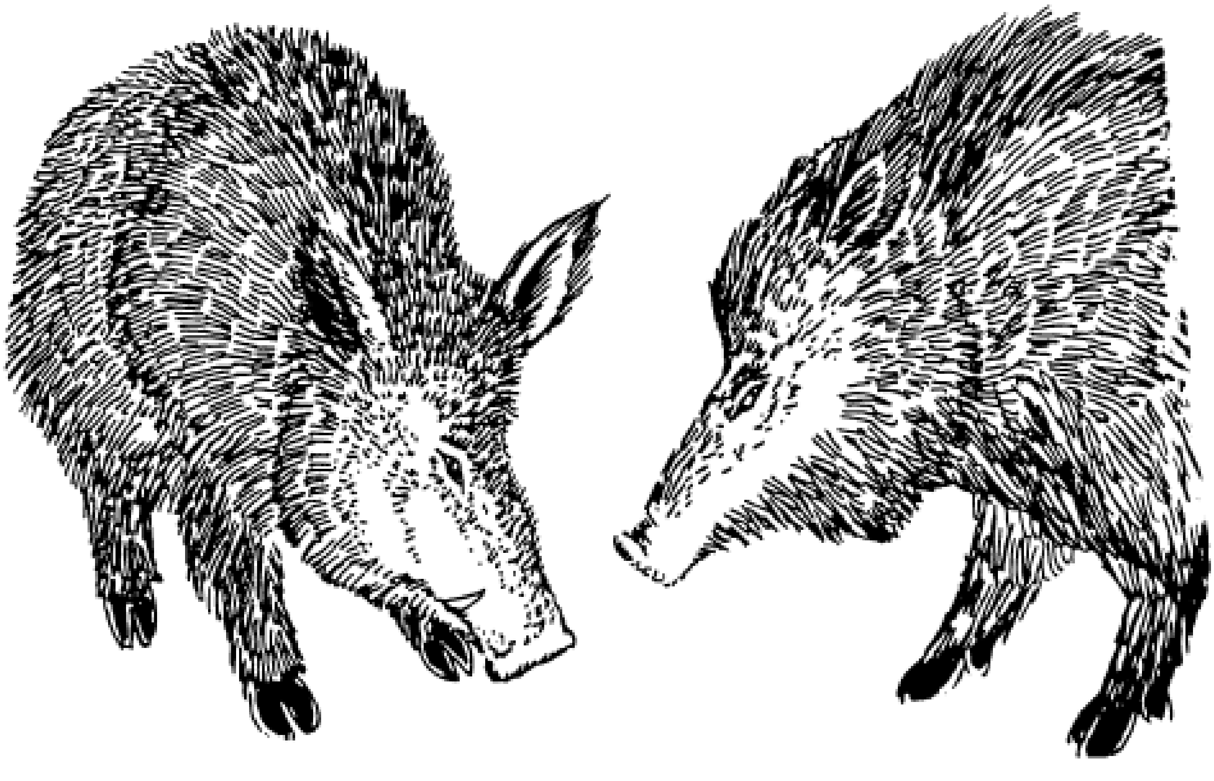
I'd dearly love to tell you that the rune stance practice is a continuous and old tradition, cherished and honoured from that primal day when our arch-ancestor did the impossible and dared to stand erect. . . Alas, I cannot, no matter how deeply popular Paganism yearns for the protection and support of a true tradition (with pedigree) that goes back to the famed 'wisdom of the elders', whatever that may be. I've tried to think of some examples for that wisdom, but all that came through had to do with head hunting, tribal feuds, human sacrifice and a million incomprehensible taboos. But I am violating the sacred beliefs of a good many witches, and I should not do that, at least not all of the time.

Broadly speaking, some of the postures or stances used in rune practice have been known and used in ritual, dance and ceremony for several thousand years. Pictures of simplified humans in such stances can be found in stone-age art, in the carvings of the Neolithic periods, the rock art of the Alps, the figures engraved on Scandinavian stones and so on. They also appear outside of the Indo-European realm, in places like North Africa, Meso-America or Australia, which would indicate that such signs and gestures as Isa, Eohl, Teiwaz, Gebo etc., are not acquired by learning but are rooted in the deeper levels of the collective unconscious. We have a tendency to express certain feelings and states of consciousness in very definite gestures, and the ones that express religion, belief, passion are very similar. Such magical gestures work in two ways; on one hand they suggest a state of energy/awareness, thereby producing it, and on the other they reflect the inner awareness and express what is felt, when ordinary postures will not suffice.

In a general way, the rune stances are as old as human beings, but in the particular way that assigns specific names and sounds to postures and song the tradition becomes sketchy. There is no historical evidence indicating that Germanic priests practised rune stance the way we know it today. Memorial stones etc., show that some postures were used by the priests. How they used them and to what end, remains an open question.

The specific practice appears in esoteric literature around the turn of the century in the wake of the pagan-nationalistic revival. Where it came from is not known. During the Nazi dictatorship the practice became popular, both in the Fascist orders and in the opposition. Then all non-Nazis orders were suppressed and Nazi gnosis confined the practice of rune stance to their peculiar 18-rune system. As the Nazis destroyed all esoteric literature they didn't agree with and the Allied forces destroyed or stole most of the Nazi material, the origin of the rune staff practice cannot be traced.

Practices involving posture and song can be found in several countries. In Yoga people sit and drone their mantra till their ears fall off, the same happens in Chinese Taoism, though in a livelier fashion. Mantak Chia, who wrote a few excellent books on Ch'i flow and the like, shows examples of posture, breath and vibration in *Taoist ways to Transform Stress intoVitality* (Healing Tao Press 1986). Certain sounds are chanted to stimulate various organs and the whole thing looks much like rune stance practice, or would if his programme did not require the practitioner to sit on a chair. This seems to be a modern adaptation, in the old days Taoists did their thing in a solid horse-stance, and rightly so. Keith Dowman gives a fine example of Tibetan rune practice in his translation of Drugpa Kuenleg's biography *The Divine Madman* (1980). Kuenleg was all a saint should be. In one scene he demonstrates the entire set of letters of the Tibetan alphabet by imitating their shape with his body. Perhaps this is inspired improvisation and perhaps it is a genuine tradition. Kuenleg was mad enough to do it, and saint enough to leave us guessing.



16

Breathing

Breathing. Aaah. . . Breathing.
So simple and so difficult.
Let us take a deep breath and proceed.
Basically, breathing is one of the factors that determines the efficiency of the energy-household. It is a sad fact that very few people breathe properly, which seems rather strange when we observe that children usually do. Unlike adults, children have little character armour, and this lack of repressed crisis and chronic tension makes them open to feel fully, be it pleasure or pain, and to adapt swiftly to fresh experience. In the process of growing up our breathing capacity is reduced and we acquire a shell of armour ('this cannot hurt me!') which limits our ability to respond with full emotional freedom. Soon follows the classical freezing of the hips to reduce sexual urges (puberty) and this reduction of self-experience leads to the usual grown-up-gloom that goes with lack of joy, need to achieve and reduced expectations. Most adults in the civilized world have a chronic tension in the belly and pelvis which limits sexual pleasure and the ability to live and love. Consequently the rib cage has to be used for breathing which raises the point of balance and makes the body top-heavy.

Of course there are exceptions. Those who have to feel and breathe fully - children, barbarians, yogis, taoists, martial artists, opera singers, dancers, actors and other savages. All these must breathe with the belly, and much of their training is devoted to the re-discovery of this art. Belly breathing has several advantages. It utilizes more lung volume, for instance, which provides more oxygen with less effort. This energy flow gets directly focused on the centre of the body, the 'tan-tien' which lies a little below the navel. This improves balance and energy distribution.

We have all grown up with the cliché of the huge chested, muscular, self-conscious athlete. Seen from the energetic point of view, the professional body-builder is a functional cripple - the body is top-heavy, the hips are stiff, the knees are tensed and locked - the muscular overdevelopment does not accord with functionality but with an 'aesthetic' ideal. The mind is often dull and empty and the whole magnificent strength-apparatus works in separate muscle groups, not in unity. Compare this with the natural athlete - some 'uncivilized' jungle dweller, for instance - and you will observe that body looks less impressive but can act with more grace, endurance and strength. This is so because it acts from the centre and applies the power of the whole being.

Now perhaps you would like to breathe more fully. How do you do this? The usual western approach would be to take deeper breaths, to increase the expansion of the lung volume, to draw more oxygen in. This is rather typical of consumerist thinking. Instead of utilizing the capacity that exists we try to get more of it. Let's go the other way. Instead of saying 'breathe air in' we may try to 'breathe more air out'. When we breathe out fully we require no effort in breathing in. Most of the lung volume is occupied by stale air no matter how one breathes, so 'let it out' is an easier way of increasing the quality than 'force-more-in'. This is one of the essential secrets of breathing; it is of especial importance at times of stress, when singing or during bouts of asthma - simply let it out. The other essential is the ability to utilize the belly. This is very hard for adults. Some psychologists such as Reich, Lowen and Laing claim that the armour of the hips and belly is an attempt to reduce sensitivity, feeling and flow. It is no surprise that many people become paranoid when they feel some part of their armour come apart. They struggle to control, try to behave and limit themselves with rules and routines rather than confront the suppressed beast or god.

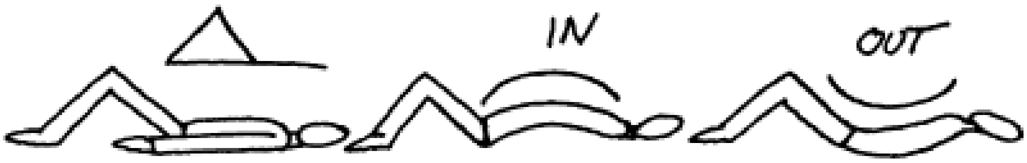
Opening the armour is a way of surrendering ego to the self: that which is suppressed rises into consciousness, which can be rather unnerving. Healing requires that you make peace with those suppressed urges and drives. You can learn to dissolve armour, on a regular basis, but you will also learn to be watchful as armour - useful as a means of repression - tends to reappear in times of stress and crisis. The important thing about breathing is not the exotic exercises but the flow of breath in daily life.

People with strong character armour frequently point out that those without armour are easily upset, shaken, over-emotional or get carried away. Like children they cannot control their emotions. They live and love too deeply for proper adult behaviour. On the other hand this dangerous vulnerability allows them to recover and adapt. Like children they can grow. The armour cannot grow. It only becomes more tense. It says much about our society if we value ideals of self-controlled, independent, unemotional coolness. Living has been replaced by owning, making by consuming, expression by functional efficiency; the virtues of the mercantile machinery. 'These are dead, these fellows; they feel not.' *Liber Al*, II 18.

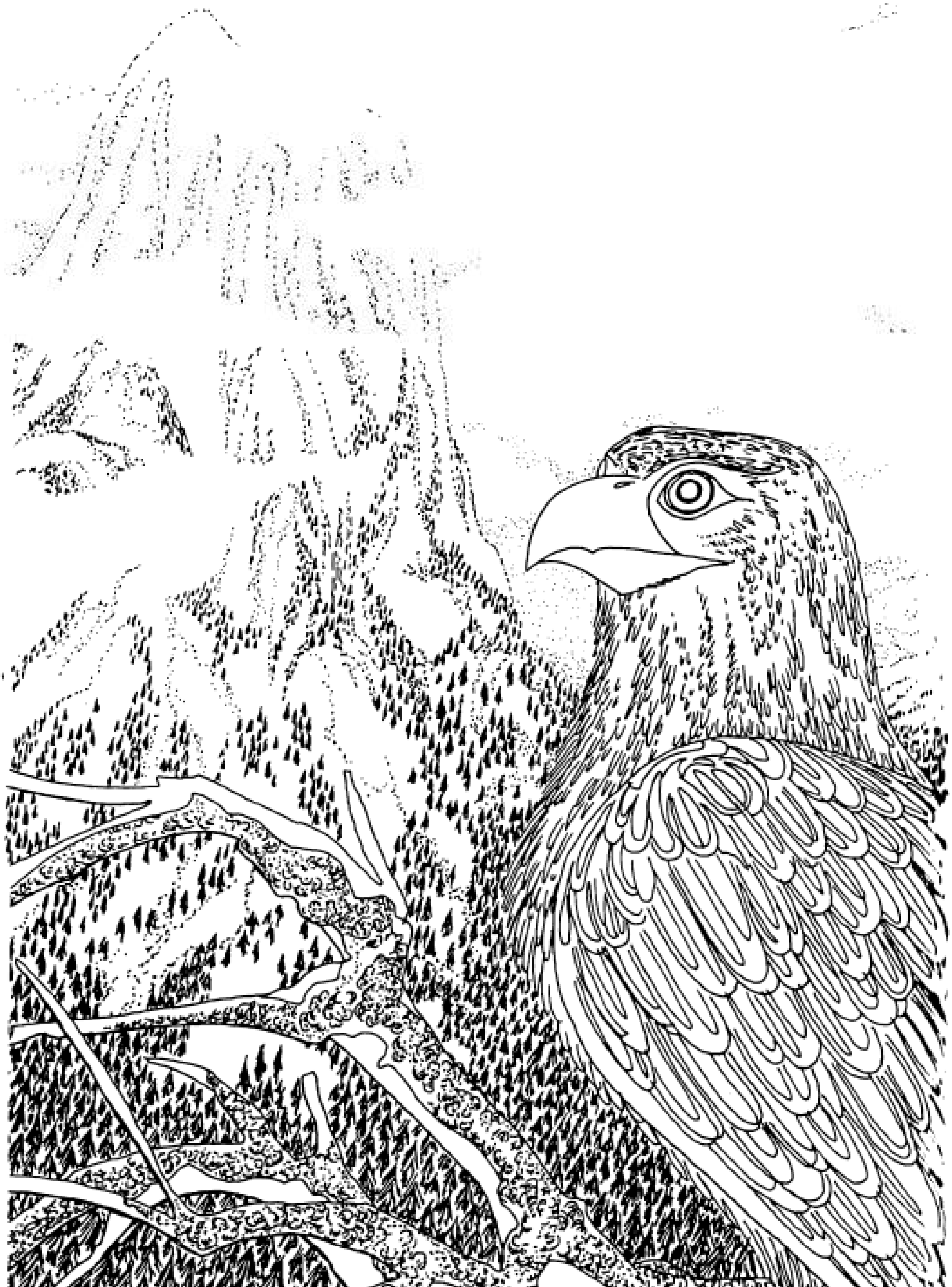
It is not the intention of this book to supply a course in proper breathing. Easy breathing may take lots of work, occasionally even the help of a therapist. I do not believe in burdening people with complicated breathing techniques when the basic essentials, how to breathe naturally, have not been developed. Here are some hints which may be of use:

Belly breathing is easier to learn when one lies flat on the ground. A bed is not as good, it might be too soft or invite you to doze. Try to leave the chest immobile and to move the belly gently. As you breathe in the belly moves outwards (do not force it), as you exhale the belly falls in. Sometimes it is easier to feel when one places a hand or light weight on the belly. Try to feel the sensation. Do not insist on any particular rhythm. At times it may be good to take deep breaths by conscious effort (when tight or constricted) but on the whole body will know its own rhythm, you needn't involve your mind in the process. Some systems of meditation advise beginners to count the breath. This may be good to sink awareness into a comfortable half-dream state, but it has nothing to do with the ability to breathe naturally. If you have to do something with your mind as you explore breathing, how about enjoying the event as fully as you can?

When you have learned belly breathing in a lying position you can try it kneeling or sitting. Keep your knees apart and your belt open, the belly must be mobile and free. When doing the practice standing (waiting for a bus or whatever) keep the legs flexible. Walking is another good occasion for practice. Experiment by pushing the belly out in a horizontal way for a while. Then try to push it down, it feels as if you are trying to breathe into your feet - and moves the hips. Next try to move the genitals forward and up (the pelvis moves) as you exhale. These are just experiments, they may give you more experience. The hip motion may be remembered by the position of the △ rune. The illustration will show you how this looks. Wilhelm Reich used this posture to teach the 'orgasm reflex', which is a pulsing energy rush moving the entire body as a whole. ᚹ wyn, means joy and pleasure (*Wonne* in German), and deep, free breathing is a blissful experience. The pulsing motion observed by Reich takes place when the armour dissolves and breath/energy move in accords with nature. He linked it to the motion of an amoeba that attempts to fold itself around its food with the entire body.

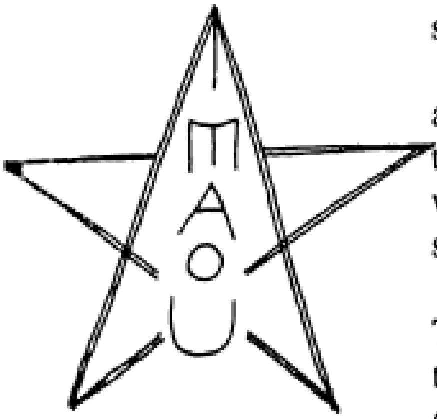


During the exhalation the hips lightly leave the ground, the belly moves in and the shoulders move up a little bit - this may sound difficult in theory, in practice it happens on its own accord. The matter is described in *The Function of The Orgasm*, which is highly recommended. Note that it is not enough to simulate the motion; the goal is to transcend technique so that the natural pulsation can arise.



17
Vowel Song

Here are some practices that are useful to get acquainted with sound, breath and vibration. Several magical systems use these, or similar exercises - in the most complete form they are treated by Gregor A Gregorius of the Fraternitas ∴ Saturni∴ in the *Die Magische Erweckung der Chakra im Aetherkörper des Menschen*, (Berlin, no year). I'll spare you the convolutions of the theory, it is the practice that counts. Like many other traditions, the system attributes certain vowels to different regions of the body. The head is connected with the element of spirit and the sound of the 'I'. Neck and throat correspond with breath, which is air, and the sound of the 'E'. The solar plexus, controlling the body's 'central heating' with heart, liver and stomach, is connected with fire and the warm sound of 'A'. In the lower belly is the region of water corresponding with the intestines, kidneys and bladder and the sound-vibration 'O'. Last there is the bottom of the spine, with genitals, perineum and anus plus the legs - this is the realm of earth and the depths below, and the deep-sounding 'U'.



Now try this: Stand or sit down in a posture that feels easy and comfortable. The spine should be more or less erect and the belt, trousers, or skirt open so that the belly can move without restriction. Try to avoid stiff legs or hips when you stand. Take a deep breath and sing:

'I' - The sound should be high pitched and extended. Take care that you exhale fully (this is much more important than full inhalation) but do not force the breath. Tension distorts the sensation. Concentrate on the clarity of the sound, not on breaking the world record for extended howling. When you hit the right pitch you will feel a vivid sensation touching the head and moving along the spine as if you were a pillar of energy. You will have to experiment. There is no single 'right sound' so try variations - raise and lower the pitch, make the sound waver or flow straight, try different degrees of loudness and so on. A couple of strange sensations may occur (see chapter 18).

'E' - This vibration touches neck, throat, the lower head and the upper chest. Sometimes it feels as if it would rush along the arms and makes the palms thrill. Some use this vibration to energize the hands before doing massage. The German 'E' sounds a little different from the English ... do not use the 'E' of (English), 'excess' etc. but as in 'head', 'very', 'energy'.

'A' - touches the heart. It connects with an emotion of warmth, sympathy, love, you will easily feel whether you heart is open or armoured at the time. The sound should arise with a feeling of 'opening-up'. Focus on a sound like 'half','far', not on 'admit', 'action', 'aeon'.

'O' - vibrates in the centre of the belly a little below the navel. This region is the power house of the body, its vibration increases the sense of balance, heightens vitality and energizes the etheric body. The sound should arise with a feeling of wonder and expansion. Sometimes the vibration seems to expand and surround the aura like an egg. This phenomenon is used by certain magicians who habitually charge their aura every morning before going about their business. The sound is more like 'not', 'want', than like 'onion', 'only', 'other', but as there exist no real approximations you will have to experiment. The mouth should be open wide and the lips rounded.

'U' - is a deep, dark sound. U vibrates in the sexual realms and the levels below. There is something full and dramatic about this sound, it vibrates in passion, sometimes in beastliness. Some Fraternitas∴ Saturni∴ texts claim that U 'evokes the archetypes'. It is sometimes used for earthing. The U sound is much like 'do', 'foot', 'utopia', 'usual', not like 'urn' or 'up'.

I hope that you enjoyed this. Once you have learned to sing/vibrate/feel each of these vowels, you might proceed by combinations. Using a single breath you could sing 'iiiiaaaauuuuu' which yields a vivid sensation of downward motions, or 'uuuaaaiii', rising up. You could try to sing each vowel at its highest pitch and then drop down the sound as deep as you can manage. Some use this to earth rune energy: they sing out a given rune name starting high and then allow the sound to sink. The feeling evoked by this downward vibration helps to pour the power into the ground.

Of course it is not enough to do this exercise once or twice. The practice prepares you for the more complicated vibration of the rune sounds, it establishes a few clear and vital sounds around which the sensitivity for the rune sounds can evolve. If you really want to learn you should do the exercise daily, for at least a month. Each vowel should be sung out three or five times, that should be enough for most people. Rune chanters have to find a workable balance between doing too little and doing too much, and you alone can know just how much you need. If you start gently you give the system time to become integrated, and your body time to accept the vibration. Irregular practice, done with determination and strain, can seriously damage your health.

Though somepeople will have the problem of getting minimal effect (at first), there will be others who will get too much. The techniques of release, discharge and the like are treated in chapter 18. It is a good sign if the practice changes your consciousness. Now this does not necessarily mean something wild or overwhelming, but it can happen that your mood changes or your awareness becomes more intense. Full vibration can provide a 'reality leap' into a state of lucidity and freshness. It could also make you uneasy. This may happen because:

- Ego/sanity feel threatened.
- The armour dissolves, which gives rise to repressed fears, horrors, needs etc.
- You have just had an excess of energy and cannot let it out.

The first two reasons signify that you are doing very well, so well, indeed, that your ego feels afraid - it would prefer its habitual limitation, neurosis or armour - and tries to make you stop. The last reason would indicate that you should ease up, not that you give up but that you give more consideration to your body's needs.

Then there are some typical beginners' problems arising from the oh-so-protective limits of ego. Most of us have seen beginners who boast about magick and then cannot get their mouths open in the circle. Why else do so many magicians rely on set ritual formulae, on reading aloud invocations written by others? Why do they have to insist on fabulous words of power and precise rituals sanctified by their 'genuine sources' and their supposed 'antiquity?' Free screaming in chaos language (any sound is acceptable) is much more efficient than the standard 'words of power', and freely spoken invocations have the advantage of coming from the heart. As the magick should transform you, there is little use in applying the speeches of other people to the work. The magick that makes an invocation efficient is not the grandiose style or the poetic vocabulary but that you mean what you say.

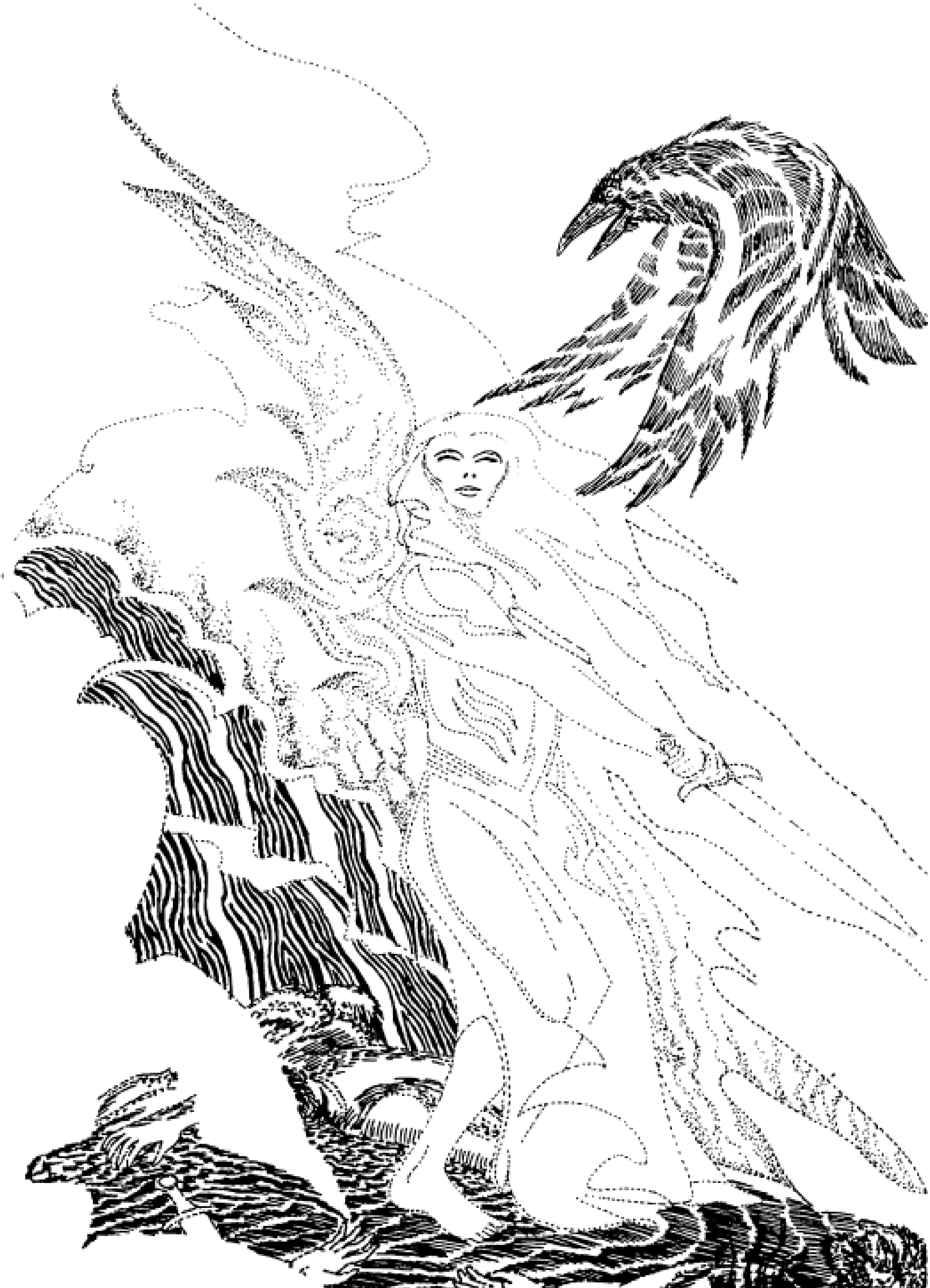
One of the first problems with rune practice is the shyness of the beginner. The exercise may appear dreadfully loud, extroverted and possibly crazy. Here we encounter ego. Ego says I want to be normal, I want to do sensible and meaningful things, preferably the same ones I've always done! And just what will the neighbours say? What would my friends think? I can understand this problem. I've had it repeatedly, and so have my neighbours. Such minor problems should not keep you from doing the great work. It is a sign of success when you forget your shyness, second thoughts and feeling of acting strange and when the sensation becomes so clear that you simply 'take off' and go with the flow.

At a more advanced stage you may do the exercises silently, working the sound only in the imagination. This, however, does not mean that the imagination is better than the real thing. The adept should be free to decide on any given volume, enjoying the richness of the experience. The beginner always wishes to be less conspicuous, and as long as this tendency exists, you do well if you are very loud.

Other practices are suggested by *AL*, II 22. Such methods change the ability to perceive the vibration. They are not 'more' or 'less' efficient than normal practice, they simply teach to sense it differently.

Then there is the question of group work. A group that practises rune stance or vowel song together creates a shared field of energy and experience which unifies group will, brings the participants into close touch and balances power in the group structure. Group practice effects a mutual reality leap, this is particularly useful when some people feel weak or depressive. It also helps to get rid of shyness - if all in the group produce some bizarre behaviour, it is much easier to the join the fun. The group energy can be easily perceived, even by beginners, which swiftly convinces them of the validity of the action. Vowel singing is something which can be done almost like a party game. All participants could hold hands and sing in unity; creating a sound that flows continuously. Singing vowels while holding hands with one's beloved is a very intimate experience. Certain rune postures even invite the working of a couple such as: ᚹ ᚼ ᛁ ᛬ More on this later on.

The advantage of magical group work lies in its reinforcement of individual belief - this is usually increased when all participants dress alike, wear the same talismans, repeat the same invocation and so on. The pattern is familiar enough, it is used by most cults, religions, schools or armies. In a sense it is useful, in another it is a trap. Groups that depend on such toys can rapidly descend into separatism, minority feelings and persecution mania. A flexible (living) group can accept non-conformism, doubt, criticism and spontaneous change: the group that stagnates does so with strong insistence on rules, laws, regulations, dogma, tradition, obedience, hierarchy-behaviour and the usual secretiveness; all symptoms for a character armour on the large scale. The human mind is a funny old thing. This, basically, is the problem in group work. Primates tend to organize in hierarchies, meaning that the strongest, loudest and oldest ape tells the others what reality is like. When we sing runes or sounds together we ought to try to find a mutual level, both in sound and in the mode of singing. The problem is that some will believe that they are more competent than the others, and insist on 'being right'. This often happens unconsciously. Those who believe in their own inability will try to imitate those who do not feel that way, and those who keep believing that they are always right will find it quite natural and good if they are imitated. Often enough the advanced cases (primates who feel more at home in the territory than others) will automatically insist on their own sound-level, possibly show-off with their prolonged exhalation and believe that the others should 'do it right', meaning 'just like me'. In such cases of habitual control/submission it works wonders when the authorities behave like fools and the functions of control/leadership are rotated, no matter whether people believe that they are competent or not. Loki advises that leadership in ritual should be diced for. No doubt this will produce any amount of errors at first, but on the long run it might create a group of equals with more efficiency and self-assured independence than any of the hierarchical organizations could ever dream of. Of course it rarely happens this way. Quite a few people who join groups do so as they lack the discipline to work and experiment on their own, and most leaders enjoy their position out of a deep-rooted belief in the inability of their fellows. They usually have strict codes of behaviour to explain their standards, and instead of helping beginners to develop their own unique will they try to tell them what that will would be. Surrounding themselves with copies of themselves, they feel proud of their followers and just a little disappointed that none of them is quite as good as they are. Magick is learned by imitation, true, but it is also learned by opposition. Behind these two, imitation and opposition, should be the essence; discovery and expression of self. This subtle art requires no rules or regulations.



18

Problems, Troubles And How To Deal With Them

- **Twitching,** energy jolts, sudden spasms are a sign that body is regaining the ability to pulse freely (Reich links these phenomena with the 'orgasm reflex') and that the energy, as it begins to flow, is passing through channels that were hitherto locked. Such reflexes are a sign that tension is dissolving, and they should be welcomed.

- Swaying happens when body attunes to some energy and begins to pulse in sympathy. Swaying can also happen in trance states of silence and vacuity. The phenomena of hospitalism is connected with this. Swaying has a calming effect on consciousness. Hospitalistic swaying is basically an attempt to soothe oneself. We may observe it in zoo animals who feel bored, it also happens in the wilderness. Waiting elephants often sway or dance on the spot, and polar bears waiting at ice-holes for the emergence of a seal also sway. Swaying can give access to a variety of gentle trance states. A feeling of absent-minded seeing may easily make people sway, on the other hand the feeling may be produced through voluntary swaying. It sometimes happens when I stand void-minded on the ringwall, with the icy blast of the wind tearing at me and the vortex whirling over the stone circle. Swaying that occurs during rune practice may involve a strong urge to rotate on the heels. Some authors, such as Frater Amenophis of the Fraternitas.·. Saturni.·. consider this a sign of success and advise that one should go with the motion, allow the rotation and do the runes in several directions.

- Warm sweat is usually a sign that body is heating up and cleansing itself. It often happens in ch'i practice that sweating is used to wash toxins out of the body.

- Cold sweat however is a danger sign. Probably your circulation is shaky and you had better stop.

- Shivering and trembling are possibly signs of the beginning of a *Seidr* trance. This theme is treated in another chapter.

- Yawning and belching are ways of getting rid of stagnant ch'i. The urges may seem irresistible, you practise a little and find all your song disturbed by one yawn after another, and maybe you will wonder, 'am I that tired already?' Yawning is a function that releases stagnant air. It also has an energetic function; 'pockets' of blocked ch'i are released (particularly at the trouble spots - back of the neck, throat, etc.) which can leave you a little exhausted, as the energy excess is gone. Other symptoms of clean-up operations are the unexpected churning of the bowels or the need to fart. It is also possible that the increase in ch'i flow brings out old pains and afflictions that have lain dormant for years. Usually this is part of the healing process, but this does not imply that one should not watch them very carefully. If they do not go away, see a doctor.

- Energy hunger, as Wilhelm Reich demonstrated, is a source of biopathical diseases in the average population. Most people suffer from chronic energy hunger, but when they get more energy they often cannot deal with it as the armour itself prevents balanced distribution. Rune practice, deep breathing, gentle lovemaking, dancing, etc., all help to supply more energy, as do journeys in the wilderness (nature contacts), sunbathing, fresh food and the like.

Typical symptoms of energy hunger are a chronic tendency to resign, to shut up, withdraw, feel unhappy, small, tense and depressed, aptly symbolized by Reich's metaphor of the amoeba that tries to shrink, to make itself small and harder in times of stress. In such cases the vital problem lies in opening the shell and letting the pressure out. Stored desires, unacknowledged conflict and repressed needs all become poison unless they are reccognized, transformed and dealt with. Art is a useful channel to let the pressure out, but then, we all know how hard it can be to get up and do something. Singing and screaming very loud can also be helpful, or the practice of martial arts. Sometimes we have to trick ourselves into a better mood.

- Energy excess is a rather common problem among artists and magicians. We all tend to call up more than we can deal with, especially during those early years when True Will is unknown, power a constant temptation and all development takes place by trial and error. Beginners often 'try-out' sigils, rituals and all manner of sorcery, then drop them when they believe that nothing (or too much) is happening. No release of energy is ever lost, the lack of immediate results does not mean that there will not be results at all.

Then there are those who believe in grandiose invocations and forget the licence to depart. What happens to the energy? We need not pretend that only amateurs have this sort of problem. We all make mistakes and accidents do happen - woe to the mage who pretends to be beyond errors and crisis. All magick, conscious or not, is half known and half concealed. We may be moderately sure about what we are doing (at the best of times) but we will never be certain.

Now it is fairly easy to evoke energy/consciousness, the trouble often arises out of the 'what shall I do with it?' i.e. the question of earthing. Earthing means that the power has to go beyond the limits of our being. It has to take on some sort of body to leave our system in balance. If the power comes into us and finds no way of release we get magical constipation. If it is only a little bit of power, this results in making the mage tense, cramped and edgy. If it is a lot it may well tear the ego apart, possibly even kill. It is no damn good having fabulous visions and miraculous insights unless these experiences are allowed to come out, causing communication and change. Going to heaven may be fun, but unless we come back to earth it is just another form of escapism. This is what commitment means, we care for the earth, it is of us and we of it. Magick is no pleasant hobby for the select few, it is a way of life.

Reich pointed out that the inability to release sexual energy and emotions is one of the roots of cancer and other biopathies. The energies encountered by the artist/magician are frequently very strong. We ought to bear that in mind when we play around and pretend mastery.

Earthing has many forms, depending on the nature of the mage. What we need, first of all, is a form of expressing our vision, of giving flesh to the dream. This starts with a well-kept diary, it is useful to put down experience in a definite form, if only to release pressure and to free the mind to think of other matters. It does not matter whether you draw, write, sing, cook, act, carve, build, make music, love or enact absurd events (group rituals, for instance), the vital issue is that something happens, that the current does not stop but flows through you, clearing the way for fresh impulse. This sort of earthing cannot be overemphasized. There are too many part-time magicians who believe in doing a little bit of magick (to feel special and successful) while keeping up their comfortable everyday routines and limitations. In the long run, this sort of division between 'occult' and 'profane' activities causes a peculiar sort of schizophrenia that spoils both of them. The honest magician offers the fullness of life to the current and goes with the flow, embracing joy and crises as they come to be. Genuine magick transforms the entire universe.

Earthing is one of the issues that marks a difference between old aeon and 'Nu' Aeon practices. The old Aeon mage thinks in terms of property, 'my' tradition, 'my' rank, 'my' task, 'my' achievements, 'my' initiations . . . illumination is 'gained', secrets are 'kept' (if not hoarded), the tradition is 'guarded' and so on. Old aeon mages are what they own and usually they sit on it until it starts to putrefy. The nu Aeon mage is more concerned with being and becoming. Here we encounter the virtues of 'let it out', 'share it', the love that gives meaning to communication

Art and communication can help us to release, to express what is moving within. Honesty requires that the joyous vision is expressed just like the vision of pain, fear, crisis, guilt and whatever else lies repressed. The old Aeon mage may believe that such revelations would damage his authority; the Nu Aeon mage knows that holding back kills. So much for earthing on the large scale.

On the small scale we may still get an overdose of energy (be it through rune practice, yoga, *ch'i-kung*, ritual, beast forms, contact with the gods etc.) on occasion, and such an overdose should not be underestimated. The physical symptoms differ according to disposition. For me it is usually accompanied by headaches or circulation trouble. Yours will probably be different . . . look out and learn.

Sometimes serious problems arise from energy overcharge. Once, after doing depth massage I was too lazy and careless to release the energy excess that had accumulated in my hands. Within a few hours they got swollen beyond recognition and throbbed with a dull, regular pain. It took several hours of discharging, bathing the

hands in a forest stream, before the pain left and several days before the size was right again. Another time, in youthful enthusiasm, I created dozens of sigils and elementals in a desperate attempt to force change. One night, during a group ritual on the ringwall, something snapped and I went physically blind. That was something of a shock. I had a few extreme visions, lost a great deal of vitality, collapsed on the ground and only regained my eyesight by accepting the situation and coming to terms with it. It was Austin Spare's cryptic aphorism 'Does not matter - need not be,' which opened the knots in my mind. A friend got partial face paralysis for quite some time because, as he put it, he had refrained from releasing the excess energy of his rune experiments.

Ways to release energy

- Small amounts can be earthed easily. As you stand, imagine that a line runs through your body from the height of heaven to the centre of the earth. The power is not confined, it passes through your being. As you exhale deeply you allow your body to relax. Your head sags, the shoulders slump, knees bend as if you would fall within yourself. Do this little trick a few times. Each time as you let go (partial collapse) you feel the excess of power rushing down through your feet and into the ground. Imagine that the charge goes deep, you do not want to dump it on your neighbours in the flat below.
- Larger amounts require more commitment. Imagine that the earth's surface opens, revealing a deep tunnel. Get down on hands and feet, so that the palms and foot soles rest on the ground. Arms and legs should be slightly flexed. This will feel rather awkward, but that is the way it is. Combine your exhalation with the vivid imagination of energy release, the power washes through your body and rushes down. As it passes through you it takes along all your burdens and restrictions: the knots of tension, fear, worries, seeds of disease and pain. This practice should be done with vivid emotion, let it out, let it all out. Keep voiding until you feel clear, light and well. Then close the tunnel again.
- More intense scenes, such as obsessive shaking (Seidr), can occasionally reach a stage where one fit follows another, time stops and one cannot get over it. This may be alright under suitable conditions but when it happens in a snow storm on the mountain top there may come a point where the fit must stop or the body will suffer. At times the only way to stop the trance is to fall down and to pour all the power into the ground. 'Earth drinks, is never drunken' tells us the *Havamal*... The earthing must suit the energy with an appropriate degree of intensity, technique and imagination. If nothing else let go with all the being.
- Energy imbalance is not the same as energy excess, it moves through body erratically and upsets your mood and health. In such cases you have to balance the power. The Gebo rune is often used for this purpose, but more important is another practice. Focus the energy in the lower belly. This area, called *tan tien* by Taoists and *hara* by the Japanese, is a little below the navel. It is the centre of the body and the cauldron of etheric energy (ch'i, orgone, vitality). The Taoists teach that the centre point can store excess energy and distribute it through the organism. The 'dragon's castle' in the centre distils and refines power. To the front of the body it functions as the accumulator of energy (belly breathing) and to the back, at the spine, as the

distributor of it. Focussing awareness to this realm causes the ch'i to flow. After your energy practice you simply concentrate your attention on the centre point. Place your hands on it and rub it in spiral motions, feeling the energy circle inwards to the deep. Taoist tradition claims that deosil circles are yang and widdershins circles are yin. From this they advise that men should do more deosil circles and women more in the counter-clockwise direction. This does not mean that one only uses one direction, merely that one does a little bit more in the direction corresponding to one's sex; we are both male and female in our souls. If you do this well you will feel that the belly gets warm and that the energy, as it is gathered in the centre, gives off a warm and happy glow that radiates all through the body with a feeling of laughter and joy. For more on such Taoist practices see *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, published by Richard Wilhelm and C G Jung, Mantak Chia's excellent *Awaken Healing Energy Through The Tao: the Taoist secret of circulating internal power*, and Michael Saso's *The Teachings of Taoist Master Chuang*.

Some rune stances make contact with the deep. They can be used to raise power, they are equally useful to release it. The crucial point lies in your will and active imagination. To release, try Othila, Gebo, Uruz, Teiwaz, Laguz, Berkana, Wunjo.

- In some states, earthing is easier when one uses physical help. Wind, for instance, can carry excess energy out of the aura. Water is even more efficient in attracting and storing energy. Some assume the stance of Laguz, placing the hands on the central heating or in a wash basin and using the flowing water to take the energy excess away. Taking a hot shower is not efficient - warm water does not accumulate energy so easily - but if you end the hot shower with a minute or two of ice cold water you will release the excess and give your circulation a good kick to make you clear, active and positive. Tub baths are not too good, they gather some energy, but then you still soak in it.

- When you charge talismans, sigils, power tools or give a depth massage to some part of the body (yours or another's) that is tense or armoured, you hands may easily get overcharged. One way to get rid of the excess is to make a motion the looks as if you would fling water from the fingers. You exhale deeply and imagine that the energy flies off. This is done until the hands feel free again and the excess is released into the atmosphere. An easier method is to wash the hands thoroughly in cold water, imagining that the power is swept away. Now it may look tactless if you end a gentle massage by rushing to the tap but it can be downright stupid to avoid it.

- Other forms of energy excess can be channelled into activity, long walks in the wilderness, hard physical training, dancing for a few hours, anything that releases through exhaustion. In spiritual matters it can be good to pray and rant and rave and scream to release poison, it is the same method, in another realm. After a while you'll come to a point where you can laugh about yourself.

19

Learning To Tune In

Here is a simple exercise introducing the rune stances of: Isa, Uruz, Algiz/Man, Teiwaz, Laguz, Gera.

0. Prepare yourself. Give yourself a moment of silence to calm your mind. Then do some gentle physical exercise to loosen the body and release tension. Jump around, shake your arms and legs, rotate the hips. Then stand in silence facing north. The feet should touch at the heels, the knees are slightly bent, the arms hang at the sides, the shoulders are relaxed. Feel the breath flowing to and from the belly. It may be also useful to do a brief invocation of Odin/Wodan or the Norns.

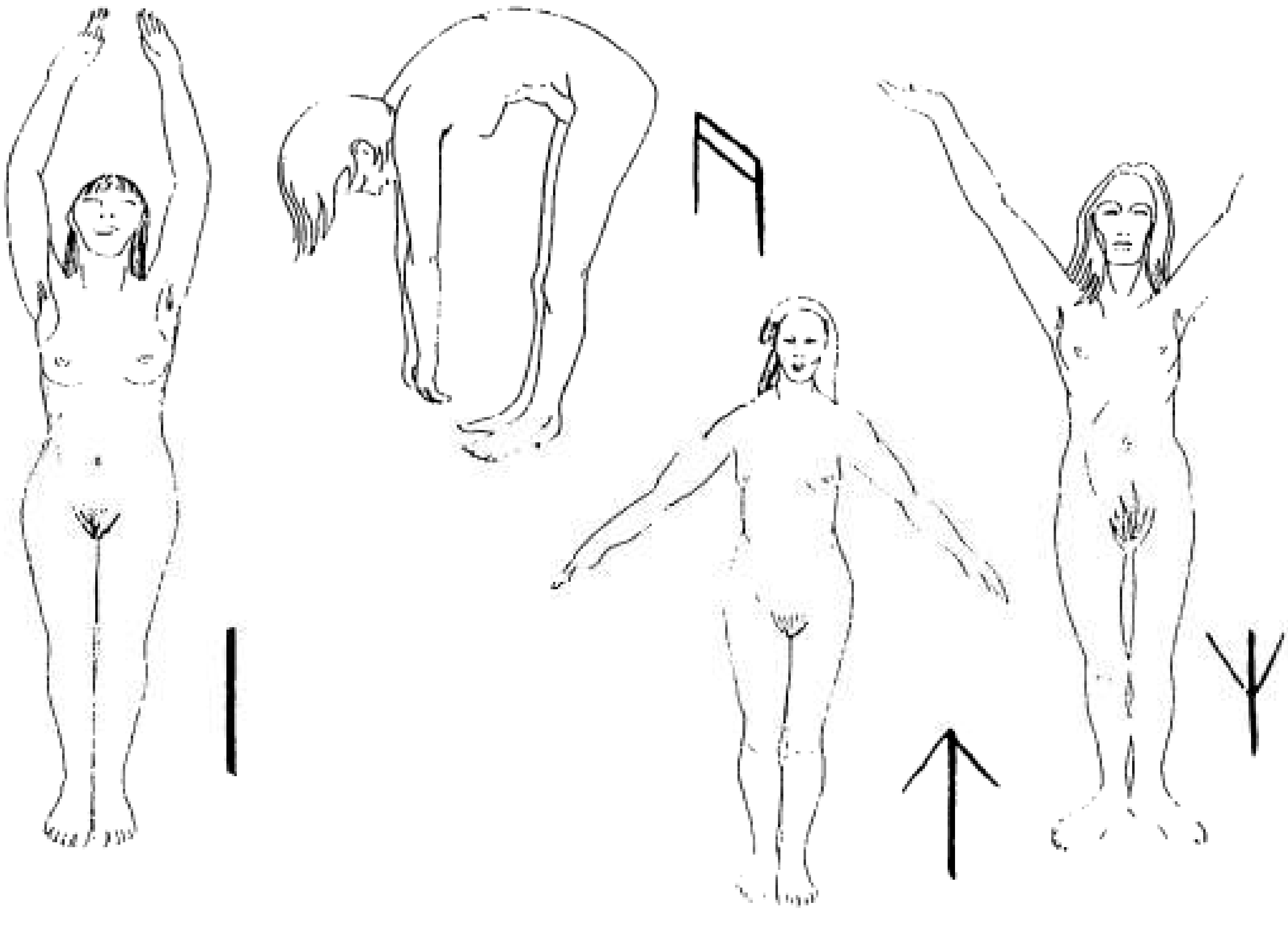
1. Assume the stance of the ᛁ rune (see illustration). The feet are solidly on the ground so the body stands very erect. Now the arms are lifted to form a single, vertical line. The palms face forward or each other (a matter of taste). The posture is not very comfortable - still, tension should be kept at a minimum. Breathe deeply and exhale well. Imagine that the Isa pillar connects the height of heaven with the depths of the earth, a single line of focused energy. Now take a good lungful of air and sing out the word 'IS', the 'I' should be high pitched like the clear sound of a bell and the 'S' like a prolonged serpent's hiss that fades into silence. Do not try to force the sound. Tension only distorts the sensation. Sing/vibrate the 'IS' three times.

2. Now bend over almost touching the ground. This is not a stretching exercise, the knees are not locked. It is recommended that the position is comfortable. Let the head hang down between the arms, the fingers pointing to the earth. This is the stance of the ᚢ rune. Here use the imagination to let go and reach for the primal depths, the roots of being. The rune connects with Urda's well which washes all pain and tension away, it also signifies the wild ox who symbolizes the power and wildness of the beasts.

Whether energy flows down or rises up depends on will and imagination. Vibrate/sing the word 'ur'. The 'u' sound should be deep and sonorous, and the 'r' may be rolled or done in a coarse, guttural fashion. Try also the variations 'uruz' or 'ururur..' Repeat three times.

3. Now reach upwards till you stand erect as in the Isa posture. Then let your arms relax a little so that they drop sideways into the stance of the ᛉ rune. The palms should face upwards, the posture feels top heavy but not as tight as Isa. Be careful that your shoulders are not hunched up or tense and that belly moves properly in breathing. This posture is known as 'Eohl or Iwa' in continental systems and as 'Man' in the Scandinavian futhorcs. I suggest you try it with both titles. The important issue is the vibration of the 'aaa'. The word to vibrate is 'man' which starts with a closed mouth, then opens wide with the 'a' (a feeling of release) and closes with a droning 'n'. 'Man' should not sound as the English word 'man', the 'A' should be rendered as in 'harbour' i.e. 'mmaaaahnn'. If you have practised vowel singing you will know which sound to produce. The rune does not refer to the male of our species but to humanity and the idea of reaching for the skies and embracing heaven. In the continental futhorks, the ᛉ rune was called Eohl or Iwa and symbolized the Yew tree and the primal forest. Try these and the other names given in the rune companion later on.

4. Now let your arms sink down at the sides until your stance looks like the ᛏ rune. As Eohl or Iwa connects with heaven, Teiwaz releases downward and the current is poured into the ground. This is often a very vivid feeling. Teiwaz has to do with blood letting, evolution and the flight of the arrow to the stars. Where the current flows into the soil, life begins to grow. Sing the word 'tir' or 'tiu'. If you allow the sound to drop



this makes earthing easier.

5. Move your arms inwards until the hands, palms up, meet. Your stance now looks like ᛚ Laguz, from the side. Laguz is a rune that has to do with the ocean and also waterfalls and the act of washing oneself. It also refers to 'the law', which is, as all Thelemites know, 'Love Under Will'. Sing out the word 'lagu', 'lauga' or, as is common in Germany nowadays, 'laf/love'. The 'F' can be done to resemble the foaming of the waves on the beach. If you do this well, your body will sway with the water.

6. Pull your hands inward to the belly, so that the palms cover the centre point and the elbows stand out sideways. Some do this stance with the hands at the hips, but if we use this rune to round things off it is more appropriate to touch the belly itself. Your stance should look like ᛄ which is a variation of the Jera rune. The word pattern to vibrate is 'gera', 'gara', 'gea', 'jara'. This is an agricultural rune sign which symbolizes the garden, the seed and the living grain that grows out of it. After vibrating you can rub the belly and spiral the energy inwards to store it, or release the excess into the ground, as was described elsewhere.

Do these six runes daily, with three or five repetitions of each. This sort of practice should be done for several months until each sign immediately tunes in to some state of energy/consciousness. It is useful to make notes in the diary in regard to climate, weather, time of day, place of working, state of health and your mood before and after. *Remember to earth properly.* When you have mastered the whole series begin to vary the conditions. Try to vibrate with less noise, or in a whisper, finally learn to sing in the imagination alone, or alternate loud and silent work. Then try these exercises out of doors, or integrated in ritual. When you are well used to them you can discover the feeling and flow of the other runes. By then you should be able to work on you own, replacing my boring 'dos and don'ts' with a livelier spirit of enthusiastic experiment.

20

Runes For Health?

Literature on rune magick abounds with hints concerning the healing of various diseases. One encounters lengthy accounts of anonymous enthusiasts who cured this or that exotic illness through rune practice, and some lodges go so far as publishing neat lists attributing rune symbols to dozens of diseases. Such tables of correspondence are very popular among the result hungry. For the serious magician they are a waste of time.

Rune stance practice may have indirect healing qualities where the disease is a biopathy, i.e. a disease of the autonomous life system. According to Wilhelm Reich, who coined the term, biopathies are afflictions that are rooted in a lack of vitality. Rune stance practice tends to ease that condition, as does any sort of activity that makes people breathe deeply, exhale fully, assume good posture, regulate the energy circulation and release tension in song, sound or screaming. Such practices can be found in most systems of magick. They stabilize the bio-energy network, which gives the body a better chance to cope with its problems and to enjoy life.

Nevertheless, the runes are no cure. We should not attempt to replace a competent doctor or natural healer with some rune pattern that is supposed to cure anything. Rune practice is of little value in such cases as arise from vitamin or mineral hunger, not to mention various infectious diseases, sprains, broken bones or broken hearts, regardless of holistic positive thought and the like. Nor should runes replace the use of healing herbs or natural medicines. Most biopathies - energy hunger or excess - are closely related to the Reichian character armour, i.e. vitality ceases to flow freely when aspects of self are repressed and 'stored' in muscular cramp. The same energy hunger, without the neurotic repression, can happen if we spend too much time sitting in a cramped posture or doing work that utilizes only parts of the anatomy.

Some of the more extreme biopathies arise from sexual hunger and the inability to function and feel freely. The sexual function requires a relaxed body and a peaceful state of mind, a sense of sharing, loving, caring for the other as for oneself. While making love a lot of energy gets raised which works its way through the system, provided the couple function in energetic unity and body-mind is not cramped by armour. Where the channels are blocked, the experience is partial, unsatisfactory and leads to separation. The sensations of exhaustion, weakness, feeling drained or vampirized or abused arise from an inability to feel, flow and love freely. Where people feel apart in coitus there will always be a sense of 'losing energy' for the male (causing unconscious frustration) and a sense of 'being abused as a container' for the female, who frequently has little use for the charge deposited in her.

One solution to this problem is the well known practice of holding back ejaculation (as taught in certain forms of Tantra and Taoism). It has the distinct disadvantage of requiring conscious effort and control, meaning armour and separation. Also, the practitioners have to be very capable in distributing and storing the unreleased excess of energy. Another method, which is more a way of life, requires that the couple share love, trust and honesty and go beyond the notions of I/you, achievement, aims, effort, technique, before/after etc. It means that making love is free from lust of result and that one gives oneself to the event without holding back. This is obviously quite another matter than to use each other to release frustration and tension.

When the couple functions in unity, their energies merge. The shared radiation eases any imbalance. This implies that one allows plenty of time for the event and spends even more in close embrace after orgasm, breathing in unity, so that the energy can circulate through both as one, restore balance and heal the whole. The shared breath balances power, breath in discord just wastes life away.

This sort of thing is more than copulation, it is mating, and the best cure for character armour that exists. I will not go as far as Wilhelm Reich who claimed in his *Cancer Biopathy*, that cancer, angina pectoris, asthma, cardio-vascular hypertonia, epilepsy, catatonia, paranoid schizophrenia, fear neuroses, multiple sclerosis, chorea and chronic alcoholism arise exclusively from sexual hunger. Among artists and magicians the problem of energy excess is quite as common and causes similar troubles. Reich claimed that 'all biopathies have in common a malfunction in the natural pulsation of the whole organism.' Rune practice (or vegetotherapy, yoga, ch'i kung fu etc.) may gradually erode the armour of tension, restore the ability to feel and recharge the organism with fresh energy. This will not change the original problem that caused the armour and the biopathy. Reich was surprised to discover that it wasn't enough merely to dissolve the armour and restore the natural pulsation of his clients; these people had to change their life-style, which had produced all the cramp and frustration in the first place.

Often the disease is nothing but a symptom/solution for some deep-rooted need. Healing such a disease will only make body/mind produce another one that serves the same function as the original disease, and this sort of vicious cycle can go on for quite some time. An excellent method of dealing with such 'secondary gain' is given by Bandler and Grinder in their writings on 'reframing'.

There is just one disease that can be directly influenced by rune practice, and that is a very humble affair compared to all the wonder recipes... behold the miracle:

How to clear a clogged nose.

A) Do some rune stances, vibrating rather loud. My own favourites for this problem are Iwa, Teiwaz, Ansuz, Gebo; divination will reveal others.

B) Sit down. Keep some tissues ready. Vibrate some deep droning sounds, such as 'om', 'ong', 'oaoaoamng' which shake up the nose and the facial bones. It does not have to be very loud, just enough to make you sneeze. Do not force things, go gently.

C) Now for the particular channels. Close on nostril with a thumb. Vibrate gently through the other one. Switch sides repeatedly. Now close both nostrils. Vibrate/drone as before, then let your thumbs slip off a little bit then close the nostrils again. Close one nostril and tap against the free channel as you vibrate. One can produce and impressive number of absurd sounds this way. Concentrate on the feeling. Good vibration makes the entire nose area, from the roof of the mouth to the eyebrows vibrate and thrill. When it feels like a nasty itch or an urge to sneeze you are doing well. Be very gentle in this stage. You want to release pressure, not increase it.

D) Rub your hands together until they feel warm. Now massage your face, head and neck until they feel warm and relaxed.

This exercise often causes strong flow from the nostrils. Soon you may hear a high pitched sound from your nose cavities and the pressure is gone. This does not mean that you have to keep droning till release occurs or your head turns purple. Sometimes it takes some time before the pressure is released. You do well if you practise this technique gently in small doses but repeat it every half hour or so till the pain is gone. Of course, this is no therapy but a specific help for a minor problem, commonly found among sorcerers who have been out in the rain and cold for too long. If your nose troubles are chronic you should see a doctor.

21
Divination

> 'She went to her handbag, picked it up, squatted on the floor of the computing room. She was breathing heavily. Jerry watched her as she took something from her bag and threw it on the ground. It was a handful of chicken bones. Miss Brunner was casting the runes.'
>
> Michael Moorcock, *The Lives and Times of Jerry Cornelius* (1976).

Technically, rune divination is a simple matter. There are three stages to its performance, namely:

1. Tune in and ask your question.
2. Select your answer.
3. Interpret the information.

All of this would be simple and easy, were it not for a number of very human problems and shortcomings. Divination is not developed from one day to another. If you expect assurances, guarantees and firm predictions you will be disappointed. The runes require experience to work well, and experience can only arise from practice. You will have to become familiar with each rune sign. Some people consider divination as a party game. They get themselves some more or less adequate book on this or that system, do the ritual required and look up the answer. If the answer fits the question in a more than general way, this may be coincidence, synchronicity or latent skills in prophecy. It is not a phenomenon that can be relied upon.

In the earlier phases of study you may have to look up a lot of items. The real answers, however, cannot be given by a book. They arise from intuition, and this is a faculty that requires cultivation. Imagine that you ask a question and receive, say, ᚾ Nauthiz as your answer. There are at least three interpretations, so what can we make out of it? The book will not be able to tell whether the rune is meant as (1) need, trouble, lack, hunger, necessity; (2) knots, the binding of two streams, karma, union as mutual change, unseen connections; or 3) the Norns as the weavers of fate and reality, compulsion, drive, impulse, desire. Only intuition could tell you which one is appropriate, a book cannot.

If you lack training and familiarity with the signs, you may easily deceive yourself. It is so absurdly easy to select the convenient answer, and to congratulate yourself on your superior insight and far reaching intuition. The rest is done by selective memory. If you wish to work divination properly, you will have to *live* with your system. The rune posture, chant, dance, handgrip, astral projection etc., are the very tools that will make the futhorc come to life for you. Without these practices, the runes will remain an abstract thing that has few, if any, connections to reality. Now I cannot tell you just how intuition should appear if the answer is right. You, for yourself, will have to learn which sensations you may trust, just as you will have to discover which questions invite misinterpretation and self deception. You will make plenty of mistakes, and rightly so. The mistakes are a vital aspect of your magick, they provide a good opportunity to learn something new and with hindsight often provide a source of amusing anecdotes. Beginners should carefully note their questions, rune answers plus their personal interpretations in a special diary. Consider what you expect from divination. If you desire 'true answers' with 'definite meanings' you will often be disappointed. Would you foretell the future? What is this future to you? A fixed destiny, like pearls on a string, or an outfolding of various possibilities along streams of probability? Would you live in a limited universe? The past does not exist, inasfar as memory tends to reinterpret experience time and time again. The future is just as impossible. Divination can indicate possible developments, can give 'educated guesses', can reveal trends and tendencies. It cannot supply guarantees: the future, after all, is shaped by each single instant (and this includes the very act of divination). Only the weak-willed like to believe in fixed destiny. Fatalism is self-restrictive; a magician requires an open universe.

The greatest value of divination may perhaps be discovered in the present. It works best at describing the status quo, at giving a new vision of the present situation, at changing your point of view. Through divination, we may discover new insights, which may lead to different attitudes and new possibilities. Most of our problems are self-inflicted. Divination may allow us to see beyond these limits, and to shape the world anew. Nor is divination but a simple matter of re-definition. Here is an ancient riddle: do the runes reveal or do they write, and make the prophecy come true?

We should embrace divination with as few pre-conceptions as possible. One of the greatest obstacles is the value attributed to the technique. Some 'serious' magicians consider the runes so thoroughly sacred that they only use them for matters of greatest importance. Quite a pity, as they will never become very familiar with them this way. True enough, the runes are sacred. However, they are no more sacred than you are, so there is no need to pretend pompous sincerity or to approach them like a servile imbecile meeting god almighty. Sacred does not mean serious. The more dread, awe and importance you involve in the act of divination the less natural and easy will it be to you. Serene ritual may be helpful, it is never obligatory. A person who requires pomp and grand gestures is probably incapable of getting results without strenuous effort, or needs the outer props to reassure himself that the answer cannot be wrong. The more seriously you take your divination, the easier will you deceive yourself. Good style requires a lot of experiment. Try divination in a variety of moods, ranging from serious/ceremonial to playful/spontaneous. Wodan (priest) and Loki (clown) are blood brothers. The part of your mind which does the divination for you (i.e. selects the answer you can understand) is equally serious and full of jokes, and unless both aspects are balanced, will certainly fool you. It is you who makes the divination valid. The signs themselves are just signs, a good blend for a specific purpose, but really no better or worse than any other signs. If you accept divination as an act of 'controlled folly', both serious and in jest, you will find that the answers come to life. Loki is a trickster!

There are occasions when unclear or misleading answers may be vital for your development. I remember receiving thoroughly 'wrong' answers which led to right (willful) action where 'right' answers would have given the game away at a far too early stage. In other cases one may find that one's question is ignored (as trivial) and that one gets commentaries on far more important themes (conveniently ignored previously). We are not consulting a machine but dealing with intelligence. Divination is not just a skill, it is an adventure.

Let us begin with the question. What do you want to know? Get a clear idea of your problem - this may involve some contemplation - and phrase the crucial point in a simple question. This is a delicate issue. There are so many things to avoid! In our asking, we frequently reveal our flaws and misconception. So many questions revolve around egoistic desires, mine/thine, I versus you, how to control others, how to achieve results, how to rationalize problems, how to avoid responsibility and decision, the eternal 'why me?' etc. Neither your subconscious mind nor the gods or Fylgjar give a damn for such matters. They cannot understand egoistic troubles properly - such things are alien to their consciousness. It is even worse when you expect them to decide for you. Asking a god 'should I do x?' is an infantile way of making another agency responsible. Maybe the gods of the last Aeon were keen on obedient servants - not so the deities of the Nu Aeon. Chances are that their reply will be as invalid as your question. Then there are badly worded questions. If you ask: 'what course of actions is required to achieve a satisfactory resolution of problems ABC in relation to D without involving E?' you will get the confusion you deserve. Remember that you have to operate with a rather limited vocabulary. Twenty-four runes are not much when the problem is this complicated. Nor is it so helpful to ask 'will it be good if I do ABC?' It may be good for you - as seen by the gods - but that does not ensure that you will enjoy it. *Maybe* it is good for the magician to invoke the chaos giants... but *certainly* it will be terrible.

Practice will teach you how to word the question. Keep your words simple, honest and short. Indifference is another vital issue. If you urgently desire any specific outcome, and you may not even be conscious of your desire, if you feel pressure, need, drive, lust, hope, loathing, hunger or any similar sensation, your question may be flawed by wishful thinking, and your answer be interpreted by a mind cluttered with preconceptions. Such answers only support what you believed anyway - they are worse than no answer at all. What we need is an attitude of open-minded friendly indifference. Our troubles do concern us, true, but during the act of divination we want to learn. This means that we should keep our minds open to the new, and that we should not take ourselves too seriously.

Practice will teach how to let go of fear and misery, how to open a gap, a pause, a silent interval. This vacuum phase of consciousness allows us to work the divination without fear or desire concerning the results. It hardly matters whether we achieve this state of suspended belief/disbelief through the cataclysmic convulsions of the Seidr-trance, through refined silent meditation, sexual exhaustion or the absurd hilarity of a laughing cramp. In all of these cases our human troubles are dissociated and we are ready to send out our question and receive the reply in full honesty.

Well, we have constructed a suitable question and are eager for the working. Many practitioners begin by invoking the gods, the Fylgjar or their inner genius/subconscious mind. This is an excellent practice. Explain your problems, voice your troubles, give them a definite form. Beginners tend to be tongue-tied in such situations. They prefer 'mental invocations', and overlook that stating things honestly and loud is a vital aspect of the healing. 'Mental invocations', of course, are only efficient when you can do them just as well aloud (and louder). These are your gods and friends. Say what you feel and you will find that the problem gets clearer, and the pressure decreases. You will not need any special names of power or complicated formula. Speak from the heart and allow the words to rush out, meaningful or not, cascading floods that flush out the poisons. If need be, scream. Then, when you said what had to be said, calm down and go into voidness consciousness, into the freedom of the undefined.

Focus the mind on the question. There should be no anxiety in you, just a friendly and detached interest. Say the question aloud, once, twice, again and again. A good and simple question is much like a mantra; it sounds like music, and rotates with a rhythm. Allow the voice to fade out and continue to circle the question in your mind. By now the words should have become almost meaningless. Continue. Allow the question plenty of time to 'sink in'. Your body may begin to sway to the pulse of the inner rhythm. This makes the trance more profound. Go into it deeply. Still repeating the question-call you should pick up your tools. Dice, rune staffs, rosaries, bags containing pebbles or wooden chips can be held in the hands during the asking. They can be breathed upon, to make the link to you stronger, or anointed with various fluids. They can also be clapped, clicked or rattled in rhythm to the inner call - this, again, amplifies the trance. We get the same effect when shuffling tarot cards or casting I-Ching coins. The monotonous sound focuses the mind on the rhythm, and the rhythm allows the question to touch deeply. Sometime during this process you will spontaneously perform the proper selection. Your hands may clutch the proper rune signs, scatter the dice, hurl the staffs to the ground or grab the proper symbols on the rosary. This may happen suddenly or with intent, effortlessly or with the wildness of heavy obsession.

Well then. You have received your data. What does it reveal? No, do not grab for the book. First, you should simply look at the rune sign, and feel the sensation/emotion that comes through. Spontaneous first impressions are useful; they arise without consideration or second thoughts. Use your own brain before looking at traditional interpretations. Ask as many questions as you can cope with. (Complicated issues often require several operations.)

After the working a brief thanksgiving to the gods and Fylgjar is required, and a period of silent contemplation. Give your thanks freely, but also say if you are still confused. Do not use set formula, speak from the heart - it is worth much more than all classical 'licences to depart'.

22

Rune Alignments

When Gaius Julius, the future Cæsar, was busy expanding the frontiers of his domain across Gaul, a Suebic king got in his way. His name was Ariovist and he had been invited into Gaul some years earlier to support one Celtic tribe against another. He had gathered some like-minded friends and crossed the Rhine to make himself at home in the centre of Gaul. According to Julius Cæsar's account, when he arrived nearby weeping Celtic nobles invited the Roman army to get rid of the Suebian troops for them. Cæsar was always ready to help the downtrodden Celts on the road to civilization. In the ensuing war, the outnumbered Roman army was surprised to find the Suebians ready for small fights, but reluctant to join full battle. From questioning prisoners he learned:

> It is custom among the Germans that the family mothers, using runes and divination, decide when the battle is to be fought. They had declared the gods were against a German victory should they battle before new moon. *I Book* 50

The delay was much to the advantage of the Romans, which may say something for the efficency of religious divination for warfare. After Ariovist was beaten and his troops put to mad flight, the Romans freed some captives who had been held in chains by the Suebians. Among them was C Valerius Procillus, a friend of Cæsar's, who told this tale: During his captivity, three times had lots been thrown in his presence, to decide whether or not he should be burned. Each time the oracle had kept him unharmed. If his account is true, it raises some interesting questions on the Suebic relationship with their gods. Did those people believe that it is important to ask the gods whether they wanted a sacrifice? Quite a few cultures would have sacrificed Procillus without asking, on the time honoured assumption that war gods are always hungry.

Tacitus, in his *Germania*, gives a well known account of divination by lots among some unspecified Germanic tribes:

> No one cares so much for signs and divination by lots as they do. They cut a branch of a fruit bearing tree and divide it into small pieces. These they mark with a sign and cast them randomly, as chance would have it on a white cloth.

Next follows prayer to the gods, which is performed by a priest, if the divination was public, but by the father of the house, if the divination is private. While looking skywards, three signs are picked up and interpreted.

> If the result is unfortunate, no more questions will be asked on that topic for the day, but should it be auspicious, it still has to be confirmed by other signs.
>
> *Germania* 10

This is what we know of the traditional methods. If you like to try it, the equipment for this form of divination consists of the following items:

a) One bag to contain the runes.

b) A complete set of rune signs. Use whatever variety of futhorc you feel easy with. Carve the signs on wood, bone or pebbles. Don't buy them ready made: making them is an important stage in getting used to the system. Consider; the tools of divination are parts of your body and extensions of your mind. The closer they connect with you, the better.

c) A bit of cloth to mark the divination space on the ground. A simple cord can be used to the same purpose.

Esoteric literature abounds with complicated rules as to what invocation to use, what garments to wear, where and when to work the divination and so on. As very few of these rules make any sense save in giving beginners a complicated ritual to believe in, I will not bother to burden you with them. (A shrug, a smile - do what thou wilt!).

Let's experiment. You may shake the rune signs within the bag (use a big one), gripping and mixing them in a steady rhythm that accompanies the question's repetition. You may also scatter them on the cloth and mix them there - it depends on your preferences. The eyes are kept shut, out of focus or averted. The hands select the appropriate signs by feeling.

One Rune Layout

- Simple answers are received by selecting a single rune. This method may be a bit primitive, nevertheless it is very suitable for beginners who want to avoid confusions and wish to learn about the Futhorc step by step. Look well at your answer. Does it make sense to you? What could it mean? If the sense of 'certainly! It means...' is lacking or if the answer seems meaningless, you may use the following practice. Imagine a curtain. It should be of a soft, heavy and dark material, and should be pictured (with closed eyes) until it looks real. If you need advice on visualization see my book *Visual Magick*. When the image of the curtain is clear and well developed, imagine that you pick up your wand and draw the rune sign in lines of vivid light on the cloth. Do not hurry! Get your image clear in your mind. You will sense when the fire of the lines has 'made contact', has called forth the 'real thing'. Then you may imagine that you slowly draw the curtain open. Some will immediately find images arising, others will encounter emptiness or trivial thoughts. In the latter cases you may repeat the process, and open another curtain. You could work a little banishing to get rid of the useless garbage that tends to clutter the upper levels of the mind. Also, you could assume the appropriate rune stance and vibrate its sound to tune into the image.

Some practitioners like to imagine some sort of mirror behind the curtain, be it a real mirror, a black mirror or a natural one, such as a small pond, a well or a spring. Note that all of these visions require practice. When you wish to work with a spring image, for instance, you will get used to the scenery around it, to vegetation, fauna and atmosphere. These things give life to the vision, they make the imagination solid and congruent. If you have imagined them often enough, your answer will come through easily. Take care that you close your curtain and/or mirror properly, even if it seems that nothing has happened. Such 'windows' are gateways to the deep; they should not be left open unattended.

Another related method uses the rune sign itself as a window; you press it against your brow and try to 'see' through it with your imagination. Such practices require training. Give yourself time to get used to them.

Two Rune Layouts

Two signs can be selected to describe the dual aspects of a problem. The right hand selects a rune for the 'day-side' of consciousness, the world of reason and law, a known world connecting to the knowledge of ourselves. The left hand selects a rune for the 'night-side' of our being, for the dark and deep realms of chaos and potential where unknown beings move unseen. Thus, the right describes the outer, visible appearance, the surface of the subject, while the left suggests what is going on underneath. Meditation on the day and 'night-side' of your being should make this model easy and natural. See the works of Kenneth Grant for ideas on the night-side.

Three Rune Layouts

Three signs have many applications.

1) Use a layout in triangle pattern. The runes are related to

(i) Wodan.

(iii) Weh. (ii) Willi.

To put it simply, Wodan is being and self, Willi is will and development (motion) while Weh describes body, colour, substance. If we ask for the description of a person, (i) will tell us of the essence, the inner substance, spirit. (ii) of the changes and transformations that occur; and (iii) reveals the material aspects, the nature of the life led, the earthing of the ideals and manifestation of the whole.

2) To observe the flow of development, we may select three runes for Urda, Werdandi, Skulda. Urda tells us the roots of the matter, its beginning and birth, Werdandi reveals the becoming, the present instant and Skulda suggests how things shall be, or should, or might, be in the/a future.

3) Norse and Chinese cosmology agree in that they speak of three levels of consciousness in each person. These levels are symbolized by (i) beasts, (ii) men, (iii) gods. If we lay out three rune signs in a vertical row, the bottom sign tells us of the beasts. This is the

level of instinct, of survival lusts, of body needs, territorial behaviour etc. It is the realm of our 'past selves' insofar as it contains, in living flesh, the genetic memories of several million years of struggle for survival. The middle sign reveals our conscious, human state of mind. It deals with human interaction, with communication, reason, work, society. This is the realm of 'identity', and of the many masks we dance each day. On top is the realm of the gods. Here we find our 'future selves', images of what we would like to become, ideals, possible solutions to old problems, and visions of ourselves enthusiastic, inspired, immortal and forever young.

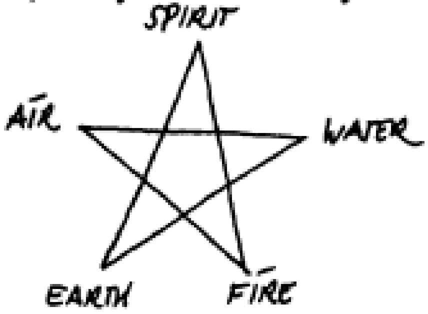
Thus, the three levels describe three aspects of a single person. We can draw three runes to find out what our personal status quo is. If we want to observe relations between persons, we may select three runes for each of them, and then compare the needs and urges for each plane. This practice is excellent for couples. But be sure to use the full set of runes for each person not one set for both.

Four Rune Layouts

Four signs can be interpreted in relation to the solar formula. Lay them out to quarters of the circle and judge them in reference to the direction. East – birth, south – life, west – age, north – death.

Five Rune Layouts

Five runes can be laid out like a pentagram. As some claim the five pointed star is a symbol of humanity. ('Every man and every woman is a star.') Each of the points relates to an element.



Thus, if you wish to find out about vitality, you look at the rune sign in the fire position, and if you care to observe the state of mind you are in, look at the rune in 'air'. This layout, once more, gives a complete description of any person. Should there be confusion, ask for a simple sign to describe the whole and put it in the centre. A multiple-rune layout can also be useful when you want to contemplate choices and their outcomes. Draw one rune for each choice and them compare them. In more delicate issues you can draw three runes for each choice and observe how each tends to work out.

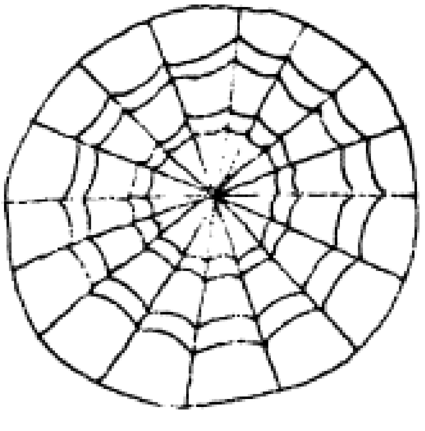
Now we could continue like this for quite some time, producing ever more complicated layouts. In practice, they are rarely needed. We ought to focus on communication, not on complexity. If you have asked well, the deep ones (call them gods, beasts, demons, guarding spirits, inner self or whatever) *want* to communicate with you. This means that they will do their best to send you the appropriate idea or inspiration. If you are ready to receive, this will usually require very few rune symbols. More symbols equal more confusion. Why employ a dozen signs when a single one does just as well? Remember that the runes themselves are not the answer. Then answer is *suggested* by the runes.

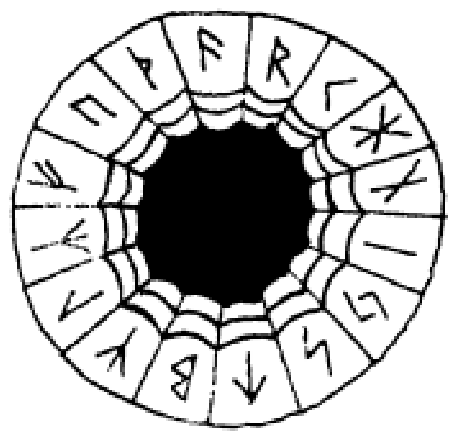
Modern Tools

- Dice. Get yourself three or four wooden dice. Three dice are useful for the 16 rune futhorc, each Aettir gets one dice, and two spaces remain open. These may be filled with additional runes, remain empty or carry some personal symbols (such as '?', '!'). Four dice are ideally suited for the 24 rune futhorc, though of course the Aettir pattern is broken. You might lay them out in a 'cross-roads' pattern and invoke one god for each quarter. (Finding out who lives where in your cosmos is a vital aspect of your development). Dice have the advantage that they are easy to handle, which makes them useful for the sort of trance state that has you scatter bits and pieces around.

- Rosary. Carve the rune signs into wooden beads (a small file does wonders) and string them up. Use beads with big holes, so they glide easily. This is a useful tool for meditation, it is also excellent as a pocket computer.

- The disk. Here is a tool for Arachnophiles. Cut out two solid disks of cardboard. The diameter should be at least 30cm. Glue the two disks together. You may want to include a few personal items in between - symbols, glyphs, hair, binderunen, feathers, fluids or whatever. The rune symbols should be written on the outer rim of one side. Give each sign a field of equal size. Paint a black circle into the centre of the disk. Using a pencil, mark the boundaries of the rune fields on the other side of the disk. Draw lines to the centre and design a spider web. Now each web pocket at the rim equals a rune field on the other side of the disk. Lay the web on your knees. After the invocation, begin to circle your finger on the net, around and around, the rhythm should parallel your breath and the inner rotation of the question. Sometime your finger will be drawn to the outer rim, and will stick to one of the web-pockets. Now turn the disk around and find out which rune sign belongs to the field. The black centre may be used as a mirror for the imagination - project the rune into it, and see what comes out.





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Unusual Methods of Divination

Apart from the customary oracular practices using rune symbols or dice, a number of advanced techniques have been developed that function with little or no equipment. The basic idea behind these methods is simply that you and the world reflect each other in countless subtle ways, so that by seeing with an open mind, the signatures and meanings of all ideas can reveal themselves to the magician. These methods require a certain amount of experience in 'seeing' techniques.

Leonardo Da Vinci introduced a basic technique for 'Eidetic vision' into the history of art that is of great importance to our studies. You will perhaps be familiar with this technique from childhood games or Rorschach tests. It works on the basis that the mind tries to understand the unknown by means of the known. Leonardo Da Vinci advised his students to select some unusual shape, such as one rarely ever observes consciously or with full attention to detail. A friend of his is said to have come upon this technique when he passed a wall against which local persons, especially the sick, used to spit for some superstitious Catholic reason. Leonardo's friend, no doubt an artist of surprising vision and genius, was amazed to find a myriad of fantastic forms arising from the spittle and the stone, and spent hours studying them in sheer ecstasy. Now you will not need something as drastic as this (though it can be valuable to go so deeply into a disgusting sight that nausea disappears and a sense of aesthetic pleasure arises), an ordinary aged brick wall (without slime) will do fine. Mind you, slime (without bricks) can also be used.

Open your eyes, still your mind, see what reveals itself to you! In the 'meaningless' forms of rot and decay, in the mosses, lichens, cracks, dirt, dust and changes of texture or colour all kinds of bizarre visions can be found. Try to see without naming them.

Do not bother to tell yourself that this is a bit of loose stone, and that an aged cobweb. Simply go into the shape without explaining it; see it in an attitude of wide-eyed, empty-minded awe, so that the form itself, without conceptualization, can work its magick on your mind. Soon you will find all kinds of strange creatures, faces, symbols, beasts, cities, flowers, bizarre scenes and strange events.

This practice is vital to the artist as it teaches to see in a holistic way without analyzing, questioning or naming. (In 'drawing from nature', be it landscapes, portraits or nudes, the act of seeing should take place with as little interference of reason as possible. You do not portray this or that person (who relates to you in such a way) but try to see simply the form of the face, with no concern for the person or yourself. Analytical seeing takes place during pauses or afterwards, not while in the act of doing it.) The practice is vital to the magician as it teaches you to 'open your mind and let the pictures come' in a playful, easy fashion. As the mind tends to feel uncomfortable without the support of reasonable thought and familiar patterns, it does its best to create meaningful shapes out of the basically meaningless arrangement communicated through the senses. This goes for brick walls and the rest of reality. In doing so, the mind reveals materials that have hitherto been 'unconscious' to your waking mind.

With practice, it will become easier for you to stop the inner dialogue, see what is before you and evoke vision from it. You should train in this art until you can make such pictures appear out of all kinds of objects, be they weather-worn stones, decaying vegetation, cracked earth, folds of cloth, growth of mosses, twisted roots, splitting ice, towering mountains or whatever.

Man-made objects can also supply surprising insights at times; even that famous can of tomato soup can be interesting, when viewed with sufficient intensity. Advanced practices aim at seeing whole ranges of scenery in this fashion, though this is difficult, as it is hard to forget that 'these are trees and here is a stream and over there the naked earth comes out...' We are learning to see form without explaining it to ourselves. Small objects are easier to start with, or unusual ones that are not familiar to the mind. It is typical for us humans that we like to see random sense impressions in ordered, meaningful structures. This habit is a safety mechanism. The amount of sense impression we receive each instant is so overwhelming that our mind reduces them to priorities, fits them into comfortable patterns, ignores most of them (repression), and fits new interpretations to some of them (projection). Through techniques such as these we can break our observation habits and open up to see reality in new ways.

Among the earliest cult objects of humanity were flat slabs of stone into which the shapes of several beasts were carved. These beasts were scratched on top of each other, so that the lines overlay and mingled. On first sight, such Paleolithic stelae look like a meaningless jumble of crude lines with the odd head or hoof sticking out here and there. To the stone age shaman, such a stone could contain a whole series of power beasts. If you look at the twisting lines with the necessary open mind and inner silence, you will find the beasts arising out of the confusion; one after another the lines coalesce and show meaning to the seer. Possibly the 'random shapes' (networks of criss-crossed abstract lines) found in some Neanderthal caves (Île de France and elsewhere) had a similar use. In many cult caves (some of them barely big enough to hold a single human) the walls were decorated with scores of scratches - horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curved, star shaped etc., - which show no recognizable pattern, no meaning or purpose.

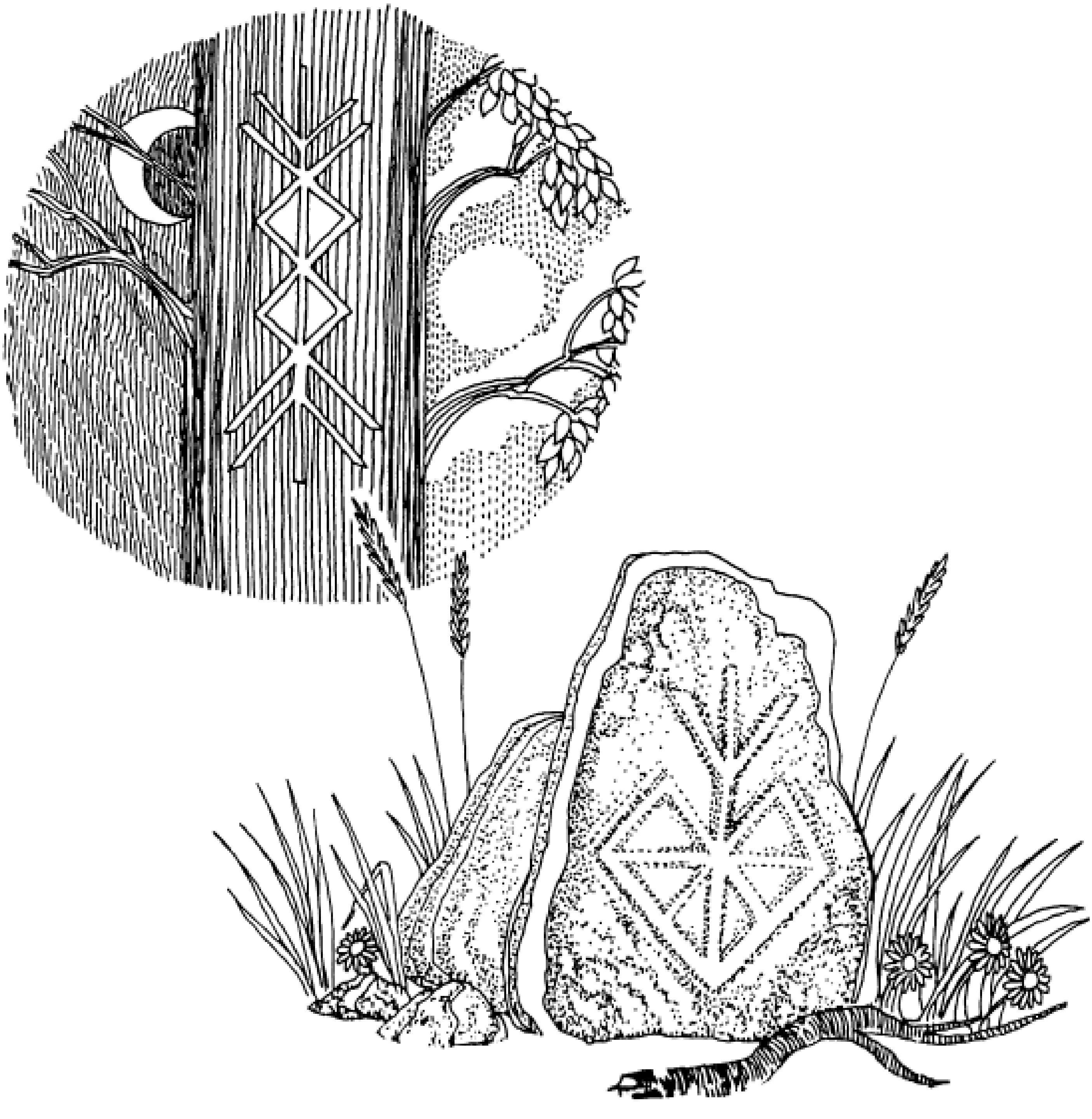
In a state of deep silence, however, aided by the flicker of the flames and the dance of the shadows, such scratch-networks soon became an homogeneous 'field' out of which certain simple shapes emerge on their own accord. These 'simple shapes' are selected and emphasized by some part of the mind we are 'unconscious' of. Many of them show great similarities to rune signs. We may use this technique for rune divination. Here is one method. Go into the wild. Walk around for a time to dissociate your everyday consciousness and attune to the living world. A little sweat and exhaustion can be useful. First you will need some item that can supply the data you want. Aged rocks are useful for this purpose, or great trees, thorny hedges, sedge grass in the swamps, twisting weeds or simply a few blades of grass reaching for the skies. We may use any living, organic object that shows sufficient complexity in its form to reveal a scope of rune shapes. Note that some objects tend to produce some runes more frequently than others, depending on the direction of growth. Practice will teach what particular item supplies the information you need, and what consciousness you will be most relaxed with.

First you will have to build up a connection. Walk around your object, touch it, observe the nuances of its structure and the environment around. Send your vision into the core of its being and try to feel what it is like to be that particular rock or tree. The form expresses meaning: feel the sensation, identify with it, embrace the very heart of its being. With a tree, you would allow your sight to glide through the branches, to touch each little twig, to feel the density of the wood, the pulse of the juices, until you realize the 'rightness' of the growth, and the fullness of the personality. Again this art requires practice.

The secret of contact is not intellectual apprehension but a flow of love and sharing. Understanding comes out of union, and union requires the ability to receive. As the Zen saying goes: 'first, empty your cup.' We cannot touch trees with the intellect, as trees do not think, but we can touch them through the sensations we share with them. When you sense contact, focus on your question or problem. Try to keep your inquiry clear, short and simple. Allow your question to sink deep into your mind - which is also the tree's - repeat it silently as you let your gaze glide slowly through the branches. Well phrased, the question sounds rhythmic and musical (like a mantra), this rhythm makes concentration clearer. Gradually, a state of calm should come over you. The eyes go out of focus or close entirely and the question fades away. When you feel the impulse, open your eyes wide and allow your sight to be caught by the first structure that attracts attention. Spontaneous reaction is required; do not think but do. Often, your answer may be there already. If not, use the seeing technique (outlined above) and allow your answer, a rune shape, to emerge out of the structure. Some practitioners find it easier to look with one eye for this purpose, as vision can then become two-dimensional.

Here we have an indication how Odin 'received' the runes on the tree. When you have received your answer restore the balance. This means that you give your thanks and gently disengage from the object of your vision. It is particularly easy to learn this technique in the cold season, when the branches stand clear and dark against the frozen skies. Given sufficient practice, you will find 'signatures and signs' appearing in this fashion as you walk in the woods, and appearing effortlessly, *en passant*. As your sensitivity increases, you will become adept at picking up omens from a fantastic range of items.

Indoors, you may adapt this technique by using a number of staffs. Collect a bundle of at least nine staffs, each should be as long as the length from fingertips to elbow. These can be clacked rhythmically as you focus on your question, and are scattered on the ground to supply your answer. This divination technique is fairly advanced, as the resulting layout often creates several rune shapes in several layers. Some rune shapes will leap out at you whilst others require more effort. See whether they lie on their own, or pointing in some direction. You might also scratch a web of random lines into damp earth, or do the same using a thick pen and paper. To the seer, everything is revealed everywhere. Again, I'd emphasize the need for practice. Divination is a matter of communication. You have to learn a language before you can speak it.



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Sigil Sorcery

Here is a branch of the magical tree which I love very much. Sigil sorcery is a way of effecting change. It is based on the realization that it is not the conscious mind but the deep mind which works the greater changes. In essence, we may call sigil magick a technique to ask the deep mind to produce a specific change. It is our job to specify just what we want changed, and the deep mind will find surprising ways of making the change come true, provided it wills to do so. In this respect, the practice is based on trust. In magick, we frequently encounter aspects of the inner and outer world which we would like to change. Some of these changes may be easy to effect. Such changes may take place - with the help of the deep mind - if we pray for a while, speaking to the deep mind, the gods, the spirits, and tell them what troubles us, and ask for help or insight. Such direct requests can be very efficient. They let out some of our worry and tension and use this energy as a contact to the deep realm, which usually tends to know much better what is good for us than the conscious mind.

Sometimes the direct approach may be too simple. As we all know, there may be problems which require change, but try as we might, the conscious mind will not come up with worthwhile solutions. This is often the case, and not very surprising, if we consider that the conscious mind is usually the most limited aspect of our being. The ego likes to do things as it always has, and if this does not work, it can get desperate and stubborn. In many psychological troubles, the ego is quite helpless. It may try to work changes, using the old methods and thought patterns and this change probably will not happen. We observe the same thing in psychotherapy. The ego of the client may spend years describing its conflicts and the ego of the psychologist may spend years trying to get useful insights from this, but all in all this practice will effect few changes, except in the therapist's bank account. If the ego could have understood the problem, or if the ego could have made a worthwhile change, it would have done so long ago.

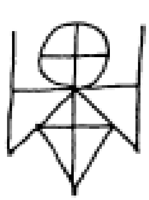
Now the client comes to therapy, and the mage to the gods, or the shaman to the spirits, for the very simple reason that the ego did not produce a solution. Indeed, in such cases it is often the conscious identity, the ego, itself which prevents the desired change. If we want this change to happen, we will have to ask our deep minds to work this, and often enough we will have to hide this request, so that the deep mind can do its job without the interference of our conscious personality. Quite possibly, the ego will have to be changed so that the desired change may take place, and quite probably it will try to meddle, try to control this process. This is precisely what we wish to avoid. So we veil our request with a sigil.

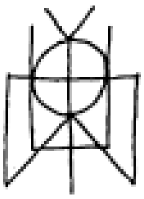
What is a sigil? A sigil is usually a visual glyph. This sign contains our request and is transmitted to the deep. The deeper self-aspects receive this message, and when they consider it a willful request, they will make it come true, sometime, somewhere, and with more grace, understanding and wisdom than the conscious mind. Using sigils for magick is a very old art. The medieval grimoires, for example, supply us with the names and sigils of hundreds of spirits, who may be contacted by these means. These sigils are traditional, in that they were received once and handed on by the tradition.

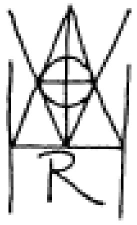
Modern sigil sorceries, such as those developed by Austin Spare and Kenneth Grant, work on the idea that the Nu-aeon mage should develop her or his own sigils for the work. Spare's method of sigil crafting is quite well known nowadays. First you ought to meditate on your problem for a while, to find out what restricts, and what sort of change you desire. You do not have to be precise, the important thing is to 'think into the right direction'.

Now you would formulate your desire in a simple phrase. e.g. 'I desire good health', 'I will power', 'all is healed', 'we love', 'life is joy', 'initiation now!' 'I desire money', 'fresh inspiration', 'astral vision is easy', 'the spirits appear', 'conflicts are solved' 'love and laughter' etc.

To make a sigil out of 'love and laughter', you would first kick out all double letters. Love and laughter = love and ~~la~~ught~~er~~. Now take these letters and construct and glyph out of them. Some examples:







So far, the practice seems quite easy doesn't it? Here are some points to remember in the sigil's construction.

- Keep it positive. If you say 'I want no disease', your deep mind represents the ideas 'I' 'want' 'disease' and then tries to cancel the disease it has just imagined. This may cause some confusion.

Exercise: imagine clearly what these phrases mean.

1. 'I want no disease', 'I want health'.
2. 'My emotional troubles disappear', 'my emotions are healed'.
3. 'I am feeling not bad', 'I feel well'.

4. 'Do not do this wrong', 'Do it right'.
5. 'Do not be loud', 'Do be silent'.

When your deep mind tries to make sense out of such suggestions, the negations can be difficult. The mother who tells a child 'don't fall down', communicates 'do - negation - fall down.' To make sense of this, the deep mind has to imagine 'do fall down' and then has to cancel the whole thing. This is a complicated procedure, as the undesired effect has to be conceived before it can be denied, and often enough our little brat will get a strong impulse to fall in the process. 'Be in balance' would be a much better suggestion, as it is a simple and positive concept which can be imagined easily. Some pioneers of hypnotherapy, such as Schultz, believed that 'the subconscious mind cannot understand negations.' Modern research indicated that it can, but not as easily. Apparently it needs more time to make sense of negations and more effort. When in a hurry or under pressure, negations can easily be overlooked. Also, it is an interesting aspect that our deep minds do not enjoy imagining negative events. To imagine 'fall down' is not pleasant. Even if we cancel the imagination with a 'don't', the end result will still be unpleasant, while the idea 'be in balance' feels quite attractive from the start.

- Keep the phrase short. This keeps the letters few and the sigil can remain simple and uncomplicated.

- Avoid specification of details. If you say 'I will love' this will make very good sense to your deep mind. If you say 'I will love with X under conditions ABC, but not if DEF are involved', your deep mind will hurl the sigil into the rubbish heap where it rightly belongs. Please consider:

Can your ego know whether person X wills to love you?

Can your ego know which conditions are required?

Can your ego know how this love should take place?

Can your ego know which changes you'll need to adapt to each other? Of course it cannot. If we use sigils, we do so precisely because the ego has not found solutions, and is probably not competent for it either. We use sigils as we can trust the deep mind to solve our problems, and like any other specialist, the deep mind will know quite well how to work the willful change. Would you tell your doctor how to take out your appendix? The deep mind is much more competent in working changes and effecting a healing then you are. It will know what to do, and how and when and with whom, much better than your ego can. This means that a general suggestion will give the deep mind a lot of freedom, while a specific suggestion may well be aimed at what the ego believes important, and which may be completely beside the point. Keep your phrases open and diffuse, you want to stimulate change, not to specify and control it. Certain speech patterns have been found useful for this task, see the work of Milton Erickson and *Trance-Formations* by Grinder and Bandler.

The sigil is an abstract glyph; its shape should not remind us of what its actual meaning is. This abstract glyph contains its meaning, but does not reveal it. We can transmit the sigil to the deep mind, using various trance states, without attracting the interference, control, doubt, hope, judgement, fear, desire or evaluation of the ego.

We have formed a sigil for a desire. What do we do with it? First of all, we dissociate the original desire. This means that we *forget, or pretend to forget*, what the sigil is good for. We may lay it aside for a while and busy ourselves with other matters. When we come back to it, we should pretend that we do not know what it means, that it is simply a neutral and abstract shape which we wish to communicate to the deep mind. It is not our job to worry about its meaning and fulfillment; we are simply there to pass the message to more capable hands. This task of forgetting may seem difficult at first, especially if the sigil was meant for something vital. Spare advised the construction of several sigils at one time, and to communicate / transmit these days later, so you would not be quite sure which desire you are working with. This forgetfulness, whether real or pretended, assures that the ego will not involve itself in the process.

Transmission. This is the last, and crucial stage. First, you require a time when you are receptive. You will need a clear mind for this. Drugs might complicate the process as they may cause confusion. For instance, you could ask your deep mind; 'Hey! You spirits and friends! I want to communicate this seed-shape to you, and I would like to ask whether you want to receive it?' This way, the deep mind may tell you when the channel is open.

Another way is to use a 'magical time'. This might be a time during ritual, or when you are out in nature, a time of joy and openness, of exhilaration and ecstasy, when you are especially in tune with yourself.

Some mages use crisis to get the contact open. Crisis and exhaustion, as was described before, can be very useful to break the control of the ego, to shatter habitual belief and to open our armour so that the sigil may slip through. The problem with crisis is, that it tends to associate the sigil with a lot of unpleasant emotions. Crisis can cause cramp in more ways than one, and if we connect the sigil shape with the cramp sensation, our deep minds will not accept it. Thus, if you wish to work a sigil in a crisis state, be careful to use the crisis only to open you up. During the act of transmission, the ideas of pain, crisis, cramp, need or desire should all be avoided; what we want is an open-minded friendly attitude.

Right then. The time and space are fine and you feel open and energetic and wish to transmit the sigil shape. There are plenty of ways. I like to work in a dual fashion, alternating intro- and extroverted methods.

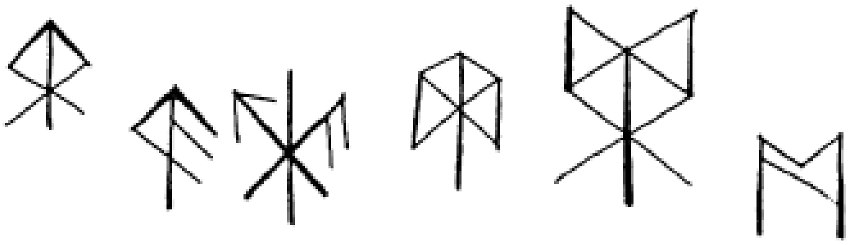
For instance, I would start in silence. I would look at the sigil shape and allow my eyes to move with the lines, to feel the lines, to feed on them, and as my mind becomes quiet I sense that more and more awareness sinks into the sigil, and that the shape begins to pulse, and I centre myself on the shape, and sense it, and somehow the deep mind makes contact, so that I can feel how the sigil flows through my senses and through my open and silent mind into the deep regions. 'Wide-eyed vacuity' is a good description for the process. After a while I grab my rattles or drum and begin to make music while concentrating on the sigil shape. If this music gets loud, wild and abandoned, things are working fine. After some of this I get so carried away that I begin to dance around the sigil. Then, sometime I collapse on the ground and begin to stare at the sigil in silence. This process of silence and music is repeated several times, until the sigil feels very much alive. This technique involves both transmission under great clarity (the silence) and the channelling of energy and power. As the two phases alternate, the problem of cramp can be avoided. Maybe you will twitch and shudder a bit, but that is quite alright.

Whether the sigil manifests or not is something the deep mind decides on the basis of the true will. If the desire for the sigil is willful, it will manifest when the conditions are ripe, just like a seed in the earth that feels that spring has come, and begins to grow. If the sigil is meant to satisfy a mere egoistic craving, it will not be connected with the force-field of the true will, and will not manifest. Maybe you will get a chance to live the experience in an instructive and refining nightmare, but all in all such sigils are expelled out of the system.

If you are not ready for the sigil's manifestation, your deep mind will see to it that you change, and that your world changes, until the conditions are right. Each sigil may be transmitted several times, then its material body (the paper you wrote it on, or the wood, bone, metal, leather or cakes you used) is destroyed and the entire working forgotten. It is no use being on the lookout for results. The deep mind will manifest the willful changes, in its own good time. Experience teaches that some sigils manifest very swiftly, others require some time and some will not manifest at all. All of this is outside of your control, so give it a shrug, a smile, stick to your work and allow the world to surprise you. And as Milton Erickson put it 'everyone likes a nice surprise.' If the sigil is willful and conditions are right, the desired change will happen so naturally that maybe you will not even notice.

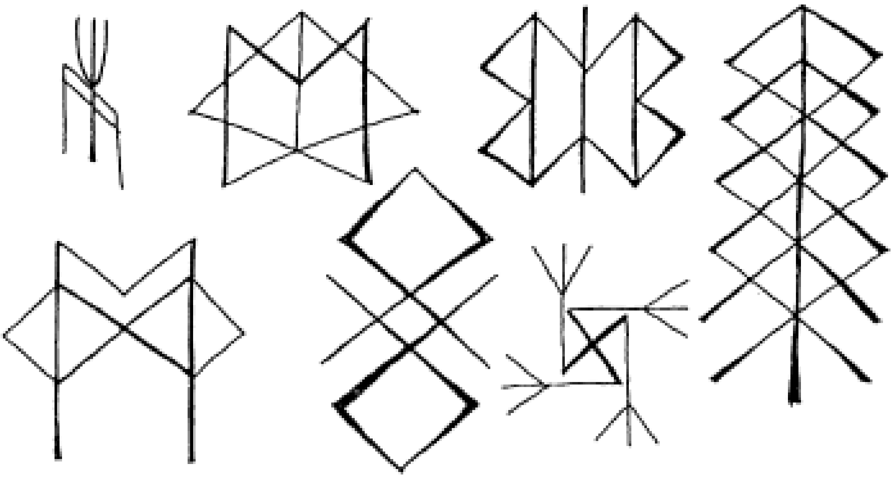
Spare's method of sigil working was something new to the magical world, in that it allowed the magician to create original and unique sigils for any change conceivable. Spare's method of binding letters connects with the art of rune sigils, or 'Binderunen' (German bound runes). The rune masters of the old days used runes to write words, and as they could read these quite fluently, they had to veil the nature of their desire by combining the runes in an abstract glyph. Let us work out some examples.

Loki: ᛚᛟᚲᛁ
Tianna: ᛏᛁᚨᚾᚾᚨ
Wodan: ᚹᛟᛞᚨᚾ
Helya: ᚺᛖᛚᛁᚨ



Sigils of this sort can be useful tools if we want to make contact with the gods. If we want to contact a new god-form, or spirit, we may sigilize the name and focus on it. If this is combined with prayer/invocation, dance and a bit of wild chanting, the chances are good that contact is made. Maybe you will not be so conscious of it during the first attempt, but then, the energy which you release will not be lost but lie dormant, and will accumulate to make the desired communication possible. Of course you can also sigilize desires using binderunen, by using the methods described previously.

Another interesting use is talisman work. You might select a few runes for a specific force field, and combine them in a single glyph. This sign may be carved into wood or bone, might be drawn on paper, leather, your skin or the front door (if you feel like it). Meditation and charging the sign with its rune energies will soon make the glyph come to life, it can then be used to attract sympathetic energy or to banish hostile influences, and may be carried around with good effects. Such talismans should be treated like living entities, i.e. they should receive a proper name and be told quite clearly what they are meant to do. A rite of baptism may work well.



Here is another age old system of rune code, which is based on the three 'aettir', which means 'eight' or 'families', into which the futhorc alphabets are usually divided. Most rune alphabets are divided into three groups. One of the old German rune alphabets appears in the following order:

ᚠ ᚢ ᚦ ᚨ ᚱ ᚲ ᚷ ᚹ

ᚺ ᚾ ᛁ ᛃ ᛇ ᛈ ᛉ ᛊ

ᛏ ᛒ ᛖ ᛗ ᛚ ᛜ ᛞ ᛟ

The position of each rune determines its code.

ᚠ Fehu = 1 aettir, 1 rune. ᚲ Kenaz = 1 aettir, 6 rune.
ᛈ Pertho = 2 aettir, 6 rune. M Ehwaz = 3 aettir, 3 rune.
ᛚ Laguz = 3 aettir, 5 rune, and so on.

(It should be noted that there are local variations to this order, and that in Scandinavia the aettir are shorter, and appear occasionally in reverse order, i.e.

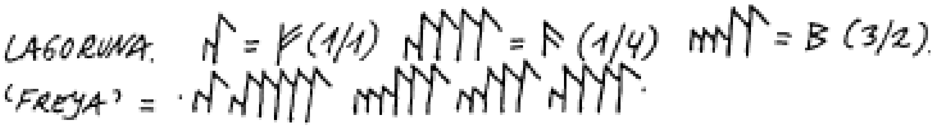
ᛏ = 1 aettir, ᚼ = 2 aettir, ᚠ = 3 aettir.)

Here are some examples for rune codes, given by R I Page in his scholarly *An Introduction to English Runes.*

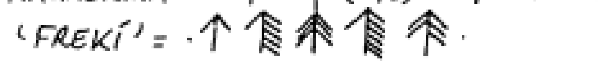
Isruna. The code is based on the ᛁ Isa rune

ı ||| = ᚦ (1/3) ıı ||||| = ᛇ (2/5) ııı | = ᛏ (3/1)

'MIMIR', IN ISRUNA, WOULD LOOK LIKE · ııı|||| ıı||| ııı|||| ıı||| ı|||||

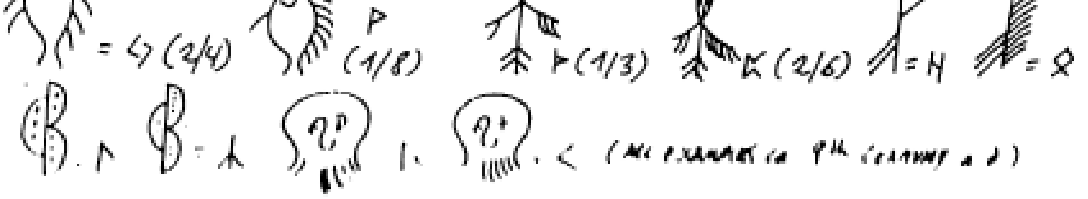


LAGORUNA: = ᚠ (1/1) = ᚨ (1/4) = ᛒ (3/2).
'FREYA' = ·



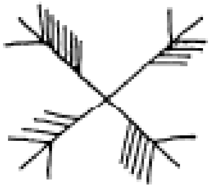
HAHALRUNA = = ᚦ (1/3) = ᛁ (2/3) = ᛗ (3/4).
'FREKI' = ·

MORE EXTRAVAGANT CODES ARE THE FOLLOWING

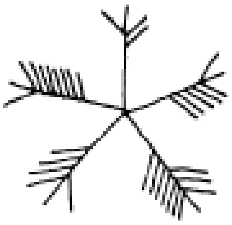


(ALL EXAMPLES ca 9th CENTURY A D)

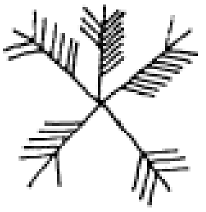
In another system we encounter wheels, coded in a tree pattern.



(WARA)



(WURDA)



(POWER !)

The use of such codes lies not in keeping secrets from others - after all the cipher is rather primitive - but to code the message so that one is not constantly reminded of its original meaning.

If you are not fluent in rune writing yet, such codes will not be needed. You will get good enough results from writing a letter to your gods or Fylgjar, using futhorc letters. The resulting message will look like a homogeneous collection of strange signs, and can be transmitted easily enough. Once you become fluent in reading runes you may apply any code that strikes your fancy, or develop your own.

So far, the technique works for all sorts of sigils. Here is a variation for rune magick. If you wish to give a name (personality) to some weapon or tool, to create an artificial elemental, a talisman, or to work some similar spell, proceed as follows:

Make a sigil out of the name of the object. The rune letters of the name should suggest the character. The sigil is engraved into the object, then coloured with red earth, ashes, blood or other fluids. Speak the name aloud in repetition. Lay the object on the ground, between or under your feet. Now invoke the runes of the name by using posture and vibration. As the current runs through you the object is charged. Objects (weapons, jewellery, talismans, masks, figures etc) given such a 'taufe' (baptism) should be treated as living entities. Unlike normal sigils (which are frequently buried, sunk, burned or hidden after transmission) the 'object consecrated' stays in use, it is not forgotten.

Last, there is an advanced variety of sigil working that takes place in Seidr, i.e. in states of direct obsession when the mage is 'seething' with the energy surging through body. In normal sigil magick we try to calm and void the conscious mind to get the sigil to the deep without distortion. In Seidr, the conscious mind has been occupied; the deep has risen and taken control. The Seidmagician is obsessed by the current, by the gods, the Fylgjar or the beasts, by rapture, joy and energy. Seidmagick accepts that self is much more than we are aware of. The deep ones rise and work the rite; they may take up the sigil and work with it directly.

In such episodes there is no need to attempt 'tranquil transmission'; there is no choice but to cooperate with the power or to suffer a blackout. They, your 'guests', are also you, and will make their own laws and conditions. In their own wild way they may work and earth the sigil directly. Note that in Seidr the 'conscious I' (identity/ego) is merely a witness. You are free to call, to watch, to accept. If you interfere or resist you may simply be overwhelmed, black out, or suffer loss of memory. If you cooperate, however, and enjoy the fun there will be some surprises in store for you.

25

The Seidr Seething Trance

In the medieval ages, ON 'Seidr' or German 'Sudkunst' were terms that dealt with the brewing of potions, elixirs, beer and herbal medicine. Plants were used for tea, to spice beer or change consciousness - witness the frequent reference to sleeping, flying or forgetfulness-potions in the sagas and fairy tales. Such cauldron sorceries were the Seidr magick that the Vanir taught the invading Aesir, who did not know much about the conquered country. Seidr was considered 'unclean' by the dignified priests of church religion (be it Pagan or Christian), as the full meaning of the term reflected a sinister primeval trance practice. 'Seidr' or 'Sudkunst' means the art of seething.

Let us consider the Tungusian word 'shaman'. It comes from various words designating the ascetic, the healer and the priest, but deep down at the roots we encounter the Sanskrit 'shram', which in a religious context meant austerity or bodily toil to the point of exhaustion. Shamanic practice, as the term is used in ethnology, has a few typical techniques which differ from the stricter profession of the ceremonial priest. A shaman is one who works with one or more helping spirits, be they beasts, plants, fungi, crystals, gods, angels, ancestors, archetypes or whatever, who falls into fits of inspired possession, enjoys ecstatic visions, travels into the underworld by ritual and astral projection and has a range of magical techniques that involve ritual, dancing, song, music and visual symbolism. The same goes for people who practice Seidr.

The seething cauldron is more than a metal tub for cooking; in another sense it is the body of the mage, and 'by the same mouth' it is the universe we live in, that surrounds us and cooks us to ripeness. 'Seething' is a marvellous expression for what happens when the mage lets go and becomes inspired/excited by the appearance of a spirit or the rush of an energy current. The body begins to shake and tremble like water seething in a pot. Each session of Seidr is both new and strangely familiar. Sometimes the impulse is weak and controllable, sometimes it only makes certain parts of the anatomy tremble and sometimes it is so bloody overwhelming that you feel like falling to pieces and can only end the spasms by flinging yourself to the ground, earthing the power with all of your being. Sometimes you feel empty and detached, watching curiously how body jerks around, at others the presence of an obsessive spirit is unmistakable, and you had better cooperate or suffer a blackout. Whether one regards such spirits as independent entities or unknown aspects of consciousness matters very little, they seem to be both, and much more than that. All magick is communication of self with self, if we remember that we are everything.

The strange thing is that there is a degree of control, as seething can be stopped in its early stages (by calming down and earthing the power); it can also be deliberately invoked by voluntary shivering. It seems that voluntary seething fits, be they produced by exposure to cold winds, drug use or an act of willed release, can in turn increase the pyrotechnics in the brain which then gives way to the full phenomenon. There is feedback to the system, but the key to the willed evocation of seething is not muscular cramp but its release.

Shamanic trembling has been called 'pseudo-epilepsy' by scientists, who observed that the phenomenon, though beyond control in its full flowering, can be learned and even simulated. There are many cultures where such trembling is required as a sign of inspiration, just like diplomas in a doctor's waiting room. We may safely consider it, like much of the shaman's trade, a mixture of genuine trance and excellent showmanship. In my experience Seidr is a useful way of functioning in certain trances. When one is quivering all over it is much easier to function in 'the magical reality' and to keep up obsession by one or more spirits. One also avoids the common problem of falling out of the magical reality into limited everyday thinking, as can happen so easily during pauses, gaps and interruptions in the ritual.

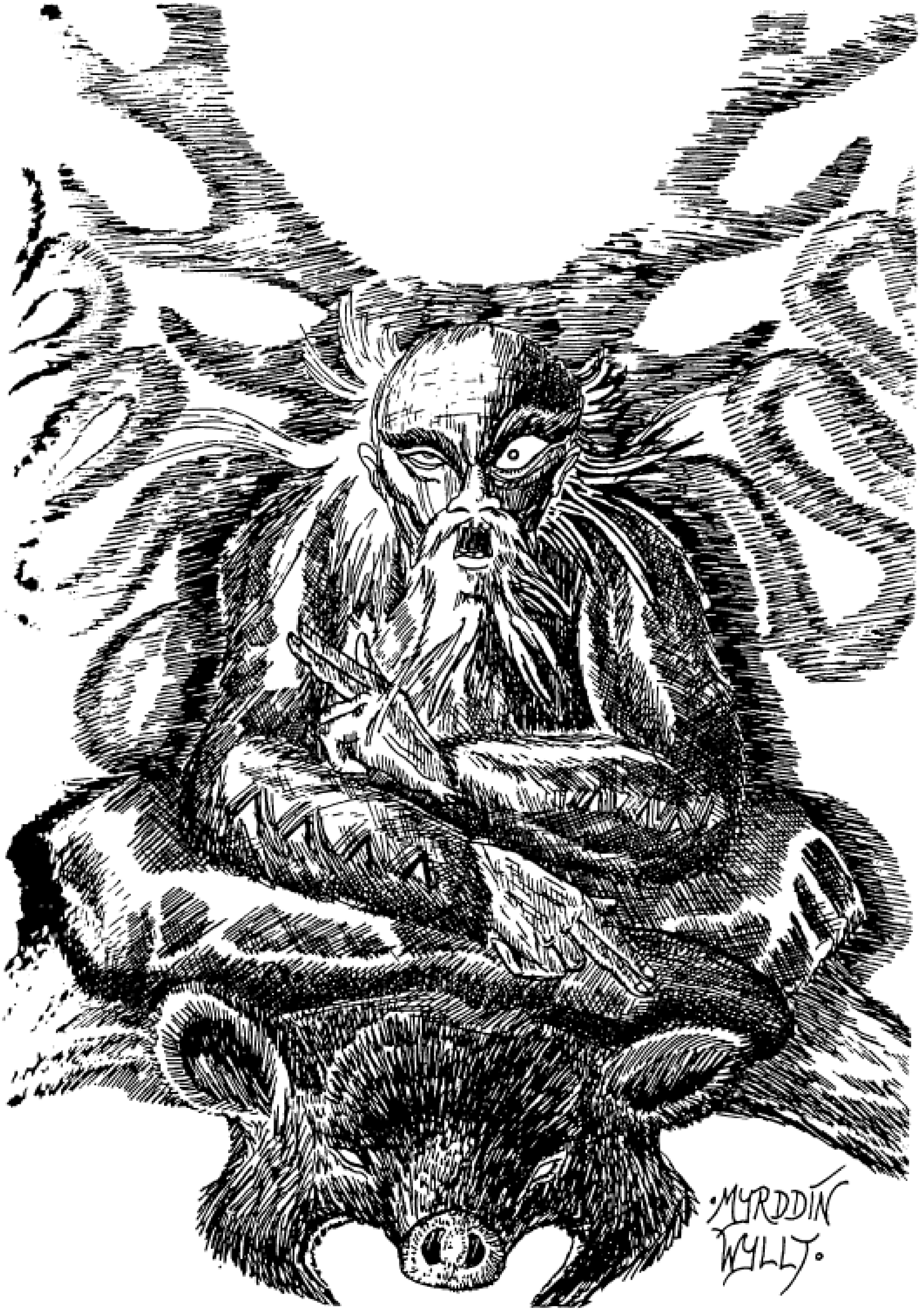
Seething is excellent for all states where human consciousness is suspended and non-human consciousness comes through. In a sense one may still retain a measure of control, and can perhaps keep up a certain coherence in ritual and song. On the other hand one feels unusual enough to function beyond the normal human limits. It is hard to express this clearly. The degree of control is really a degree of non-resistance and cooperation. The human 'I' seems to watch the performance, accepting full expression of the spirits and cooperating, as the passive partner, in the doing of mutual will. The conscious 'I' can only remain conscious as long as it accepts its passive role, trusts the obsessive energy and rejoices in the performance. Obviously the greatest danger lies in obsession by a being that is hostile to your true will. I am certainly not advising that one should accept control by anything that comes along, as happens to spiritualist mediums and naive dabblers. The guardian spirit, one's personal gods or totem animals are a much safer bet. One may surrender oneself to beings that one knows well and that represent vital aspects of the all-will. These beings will understand when you are cautious. Hostile entities often demand blind faith, which is a certain road to insanity.

Many shamanic traditions claim that the obsessed shaman is totally oblivious and not responsible for his or her acts. Often the claim of being 'blacked-out and beyond control' is used to avoid censorship by the conscious ego or to soothe feelings of guilt or shame. Not all shamans who claim unconsciousness are really unconscious. Some simply do not want to talk or accept responsibility for their actions. Seidr is a very fluent field of activity, there are many diffuse states and sometimes one seems to sway between the extremes of control and being controlled. The nature of each episode depends on many factors. Sometimes the spasms are required to build up a field of force, massive amounts of energy release themselves, armour comes apart, as do all notions of limits and restriction. This sort of seething relaxes tensions, it clears the energy channels and lets pressure out. Like an extreme orgasm it leaves one empty, open and aglow. Some of the wilder spirits give one a particularly heavy fit when they come, it depends on how tense and restricted one feels at the time. This is Wodan consciousness in its expression of wildness, rage and ecstasy.

Then there is seething that goes beyond the release of accumulated tension. Here the body conducts the atmospheric energy/consciousness and begins to vibrate with the power that rushes through. This may happen when one is deeply involved with earthing force, for example. Sometimes the consciousness appears as an obsessive spirit (a guest) and occasionally it happens in-between, in a curious state of voidness, expansion and absent-mindedness. Seething trances are highly useful for seeing vision or working in the astral. It seems - and this has been confirmed by several mages who kindly experimented with the technique - that prolonged seething clears the mind and makes mental activity more intense. Astral visions, for example, tend to become more detailed and developed they are in light meditation.

I used to get such fits from early childhood, when drawing pictures and in the pauses when I was staring empty-minded at the images. Naturally my parents were terrified and did their best to stop them. It took me several years to rediscover this art and to go into the vibration without guilt and fear of insanity. It is a curious thing, but trance behaviour usually conforms with one's spiritual ideals. We are used to the image of the holy sage seated in silence and serenity. Most civilized people feel a deep horror at the idea of excitement and wild vibration welling up from the hips and thighs, even leading to all-body-spasms; and the notion of releasing control to some savage spirit seems downright indecent. Spirits, after all, have their own codes of proper behaviour. The *Ynglingasaga* tells us that Odin invented Seidr, and that it is the strongest of all arts. It also says that the men thought it was too dangerous and indecent, meaning that they left the practice to women, who used it for an amazing array of sorceries.

Not all spirits appear in a fit of extreme vibration, complete with rolling eyes, clutching hands (or tentacles), snarling sounds and foaming mouth. Yog Sothoth may give you that treatment when in a generous and friendly mood (there are times when such unions are good for the health); other entities act differently, according to their temperament, your cooperation (or resistance) and the will to be shared. Some spirits are very peaceful, making body sway just a little (if at all) and radiate a feeling of gentle love, and others offer insight into the cosmic joke and rejoice in hours of laughing cramps. Occasionally the trembling is strongest when one 'changes gear', moving from one part of a ritual to another. I hope that these brief comments can be of use should you be one of the select. Everything else is experiment by trial and error; your spirits - all self - will know what to do if you let them. For a detailed introduction to seething trances, with practical exercises, see and enjoy my next book.


MYRDDIN
WYLLT

26
The Magical Use Of Energy

In this chapter I shall write from the shamanic point of view. I shall speak of spirits, which may upset some readers, but as was outlined earlier, the model that says that 'spirits are actual entities' makes quite as much sense as the model which claims that 'the spirits are actually projections of parts of our deep minds'. If this idea annoys you, well, here is a good opportunity to practice the lofty art of suspending judgement.

Let us try to look at ritual in a new way. When we examine a ritual, we can do so by concentrating on its meaning and contents (i.e. what is evoked? What is the intention? Which symbols are used? What exactly is said? etc.) which is the usual way people consider and evaluate such activities. Another way is to ignore 'who' and 'what' and to concentrate on the 'how' and 'when'. The 'why' is something you might work out for yourself, if you have a couple of decades with nothing better to do. Let us look at functions and procedure. Most rituals, no matter the creed, cult or tradition, have certain common elements and a similar syntax to effect specific changes. Usually they start with dissociation, which means that the mage detaches consciousness from everyday activities, work problems, overdue bills, loud neighbours and the daily newspaper. This is called banishing. We get rid of unwanted influences at this stage, and there are dozens of ways of doing so. Some do it quite simply by screaming 'all negative influences go away now!' Others wield a dagger, sword or a sharp stone, some 'empty their minds' while others draw complicated symbols in the air while vibrating names in Hebrew. This part is ended when the unwanted influences and thoughts are expelled. Then comes a brief pause, during which the end of the banishing is signalled with a bell, clapping hands or some such activity.

Next follows association, which means that we attach our awareness to whatever reality we intend to work with. Robes, clothes, temple equipment, symbols, altar layout, pictures, colours, scents, sounds, chants, gestures, ritual tools etc are all part of the vocabulary of association; they connect us effectively with the state of consciousness with which we want to get in touch. This stage is called invocation. Invocation usually makes use of speech, prayer, gesture, dance, symbolism and creative imagination, to direct our awareness the way we will. We call forth the desired consciousness, and we call it into ourselves. As is customary in most systems of magick and religion, the consciousness which we invoke is perceived in the various shapes of gods, angels, demons, nature spirits, beasts, spirit helpers, archetypes and so on. These beings appear masked in symbolic form. We clothe them in our imagination until the image is real enough to permit interaction and communication. Note that such a spirit is more than imagination. It appears in the form of imagination (i.e. in astral matter, or dream stuff) and reveals its nature in a shape suited to the magician's understanding.

The difference between a real spirit and a spirit which we imagine at an idle moment or while reading horror stories is that the former connects with realms of energy and consciousness and the power of the deep mind, while the latter is more or less constructed by the ego and connects with very little. Its shape is like an empty shell. The real spirit will have a mind of its own and enough power to upset the ego if needed, while the constructed spirit will simply reflect our wishful thinking, and this is a vast difference, no matter that their bodies are equally imaginary.

Now we come to a point which is frequently ignored. To manifest themselves, the spirits require a certain amount of energy. In the old days of sorcery at the cross-roads, the daring mage used to supply energy in several ways. The mage was supposed to be chaste, and to fast and pray for days before the act of evocation. (Few were daring enough to allow the spirits to be actually invoked into the circle.) This means that a lot of emotional energy - if not hysterical determination - was released when the actual time of the ritual came. Fear of the spirit added more energy to the event, not to mention the fear of being discovered at work. More so, it was often obligatory to slay a small beast, such as a dove, a black hen or a young goat, so that the spirits might feed on it.

What is the purpose of such slaughter? The soul of the beast had nothing to do with the rite. What was released through the blood-spilling was simple, physical life energy, the same living vitality which we have called ch'i, orgone, prana, bio-energy etc., in other parts of this book. As the sacrifice was slain, all of its energy was released at once. Now Aleister Crowley tells us (*Magick* p 219) that, '...it was the theory of the ancient magicians that any living being is a storehouse of energy varying in quantity according to the size and health of the animal, and in quality according to its mental and moral character.' You find the same sort of thinking among Nepalese shamans who frequently sacrifice sheep to feed the spirits and to keep them happy. Evil spirits, who are supposed to steal souls and bring disease, can be bought off with a sufficient amount of blood. The same idea can be found among Celtic Druids (who believed that to save a man you have to kill another), among Germanic priests (who preferred to kill oxen, but occasionally promised their prisoners of war to the gods of strife and slaughter) and among dozens of other cultures.

It may be interesting to note that in many cases it was permissible to eat a sacrificial animal after the gods and spirits had devoured its essential life-force. It was part of the old tradition that the spirits feed on the energy released. Personally, I do not believe that this is quite true. The spirits assure me that they require the energy not as food but as a medium of manifestation. They do not need the energy to live, as they exist independently of such rituals, but use the power to take on a form sufficiently solid to communicate with us and to effect change on the material plane.

Of course I would not expect you to believe this straight away. As a mature and sensible person you will undoubtably prefer to ask the spirits yourself, which is the scientific way of doing esoteric research. Let us concentrate on the essence of this operation. As I hope you will understand, it is not exactly blood which we need but its energy. We do not require blood sacrifices to get good effects; the simple, biological life energy we need can be generated in many ways.

Michael Bertiaux gives one of the most wonderfully simple methods of raising such power. Let me quote from lesson 2 of his course in Voudoo energies: '... then you will offer power to the spirits by rubbing your hands together for a couple of minutes and then holding your hands towards the altar with the palms open and extending the fingers upwards, so that the altar will receive the power as it flows out of the palms of your hands and to the spirit world. This is your gift to the spirits, the power of life or vitality which will be used by them in healing or in some other work.' (*Voudon Gnostic Workbook.*) Did you imagine it might be so simple? Well, let's look at other methods.

There are many budding shamans, especially in modern countries, who fail to get contact with their power beasts for the simple reason that they try to work this 'mentally' or 'in the astral' and forget to involve the body. If you wish to contact a power beast you will have to supply a dose of power first, to get the communication going. Sitting down and thinking about it will not raise much power in the physical sense, the same goes for reading books and smoking dope. Try it the wild way, as wild spirits love wild people. A good initial invocation of a power beast requires that you call loud, chant, scream, howl and yell, that you play a swift rhythm on a rattle or drum, and that you keep dancing and chanting, if need be for hours, till sweat runs over your face and body shakes and shudders with passion and exhaustion. Such action will release plenty of high quality energy, and it is this energy which will attract the beast and allow it to appear to you (through the imagination). You may then allow it into your body, to live and enjoy in living flesh.

At later stages, when you have come to know your beast for some time, less effort will be needed. Both of you will have learned the mutual identity. There is a strange thing about this release of power. You send out a lot of your physical and emotional energy, which is seized and shaped by the spirit's manifestation. Then, however, comes a return flow, and union with the spirit fills you with power and joy far surpassing what you have initially sent out.

So far we have outlined that physical activity, dancing, chanting, emotional outbursts and wild music can be used to generate power for ritual. Voudoo people may say 'the *loa* (gods) like to see us dancing for them', but it is not the specific dance steps that attract the loa, it is the act of dancing in a wild and abandoned way that calls the gods and makes them want to indwell their human servitors. There are magicians who go to the disco to have fun with the spirits, and others who love to run, leap and climb in the forests.

Another potent source can be emotion. Prolonged prayer with plenty of passion is a good example, especially if you pray out of some crisis situation. If you spend eleven months praying for your Holy Guardian Angel to appear, it may easily burn its way straight through your mind in the hour of recognition. Some spirits create energy by the act of appearance. The ancient ones, and the forgotten ones, are excellent examples. The first contact with these primal yonder-entities confronts the conscious mind with the full impact of chaos and madness. The shape of their appearance is specifically designed to throw the ego into a fit of sheer horror which cannot be adequately described. These beings feed on your sheer and overwhelming horror, which releases the energy required for their manifestation. Of course with growing familiarity, the mage will come to understand their true nature and the fear energy will be replaced by sympathy, love and ecstasy.

This change in attitude, however, will require a little practice in the art of dissolving both reality and identity. No doubt it will make your ego squeak itself to death, but then, this is what the fuss is all about, isn't it? Just as the spirits can be manifested through fear energy (Casteneda gives some lovely examples) they can also manifest through the brighter emotions of joy, laughter, lust and love. The joyous rites of eucharist and thanksgiving, of drinking, feasting and laughing with the gods and spirits have their origin in this force field.

Artistic activity is another wonderful method. In a sense we can claim that we nourish our contact with the spirits if we express the wholeness of ourselves. People who live in close contact with the spirits by being busy manifesting and earthing will not require much effort to generate energy, as there will always be plenty of energy in all they do and delight in.

As you should have guessed by now, the energy released by rune practice or vowel song, especially when done in a group working, is another good power source. This energy field will pulse around the group until it is released in a willed direction. Ask the gods and spirits to make use of it.

One of the strongest sources of bio-energy is love making. So called sexual magick can produce an impressive force-field for the spirits to manifest in; the sexual fluids and the energy jolts of orgasm release much more power than the slaughter of some beast. Sexual energy, coupled with lust, love and joy of union is one of the strongest forces we may experience. Unlike the life-force of a sacrificial beast, it is created, focused and freely offered by ourselves. Many magical traditions claim that every act of love making tends to attract all sorts of instincts, vampires, spirits and quasi-entities to the field of energy. To use this force for magick can be a difficult matter, for, as Kenneth Grant notes, 'The mental exaltation generated by a magically controlled orgasm forms a lucid lens-like window past which stream the vivid astral imagery of the subconscious mind. Specific images are evoked and "fixed", they become instantly and vitally alive.' (*The Magical Revival*) This is a force born out of the will to unite and the will to reproduce that generates children in every union. Its application requires training, which is why many magical orders make such a fuss of secrecy about it.

It need hardly be emphasized that if we offer the energy of our lovemaking, it should come from both partners. To use the energy of another to feed one's own spirits, as is quite normal practice in certain occult groups, is, in my opinion, an exotic variety of vampiric abuse. If you cannot cooperate with an equal, a loving partner, you would be much better off energizing your magick with masturbation. Maybe it is less fun, but it is certainly more honest.

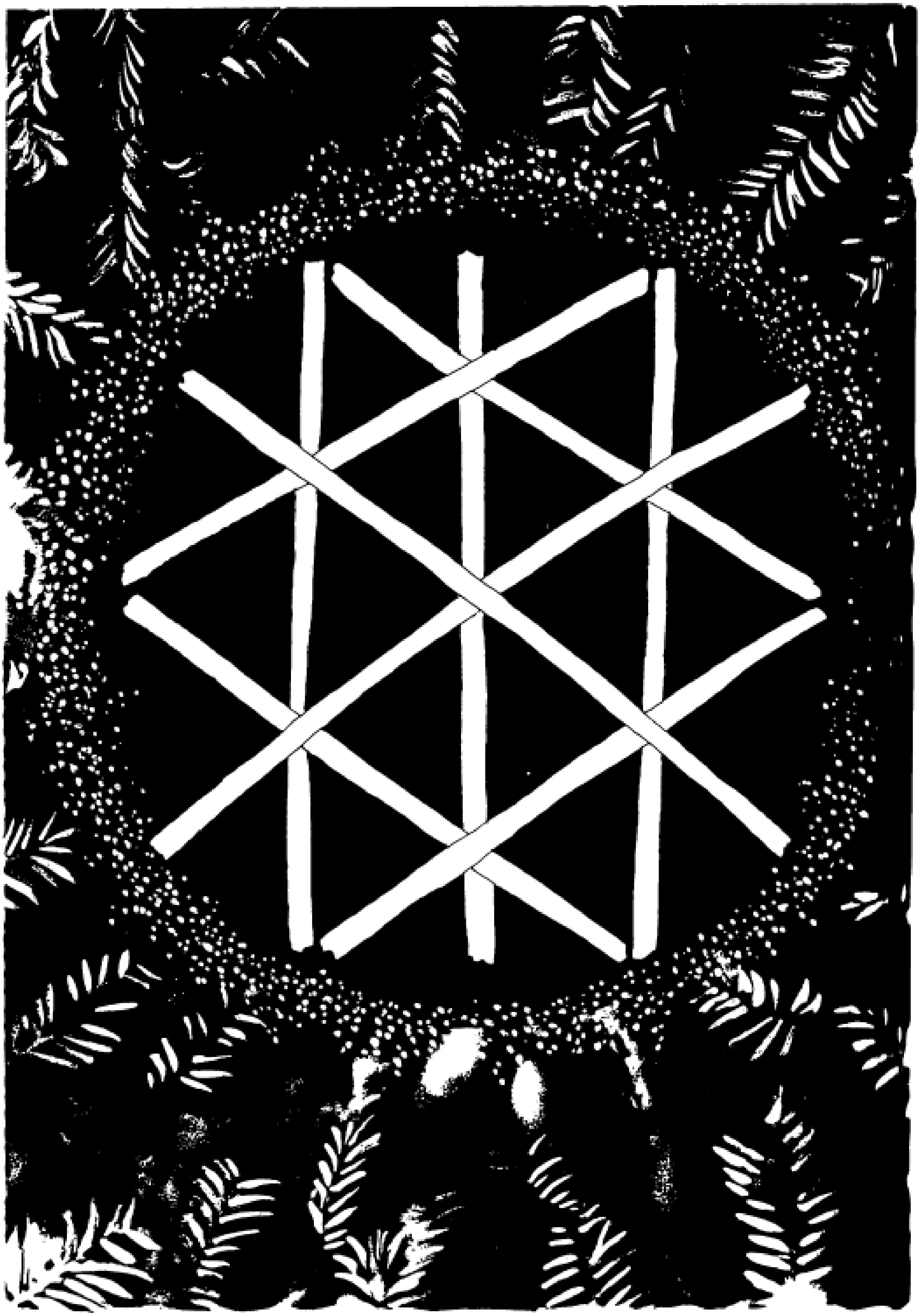
Seething trances or Seidr, which make the body shudder and shake, are another way of generating a force field. This phenomenon is quite common in shamanism, it attracts the gods and spirits to indwell and obsess the body of the shaman. Did you know that the old Indo-European word for 'spirit', **Gheis*, the source of the modern word 'ghost', used to mean 'to shudder, to be excited, to agitate, to stir up'? These ideas have to do with passion and energy, it is only in the last couple of centuries that the spirits (*Geister*, in German) were associated with the ideas of fear, dread and dead people.

Another possible energy supply can be found in the power currents that run through the earth. The earth ch'i may create places where the flow is so concentrated that the spirits may appear more easily. Such sites were often selected for sanctuaries, temple grounds or sacred groves, and sometimes several different magical traditions used the same places in the passage of the aeons. Their rituals gave sentience and meaning to the earth energies, and if we encounter such places today we may find unusual forces arising. Such places, provided the magician is in harmony with their force and intelligence, may provide an excellent power focus to amplify the contact with the unknown realms. Ancient sites, which may have seen several changes in their information over the aeons, will require the mage to bring them up to date, to attune them to our present aeons. Work in the Maatian way will permit a contact to other times, and other cultures working at the same site, both in the past and future. A key to communication across time is congruence. What do you have in common with the people who lived and loved at a given place and time?

Some spirits, such as the guardian angel, the totem beasts, the fylgia, our favourite deities or the patron demons seem to dwell in no specific place. These spirits can be considered part of us, just as our conscious identity is part of them. The energy we require to get in touch with them will create a communication channel within our system. Once this channel is created, we require fairly little energy to keep it open, provided we live in harmony and frequent contact with the spirit in question. The more the spirits are integrated into your life, and allowed to express and manifest their nature through you, the easier will communication become.

The spirit of Loki suggests that I end this chapter by emphasizing that all spirits are illusions, and that they are almost as illusionary as our everyday personalities. I agree with this - one illusion agreeing with another - and stumble to the fridge for a drop of champagne. Cheers!

SKULDA



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The Vision Of The Runes

The last section of this book deals with the tools of the working: the rune signs and the interpretations attributed to them. They are the fruits of the tree and the seeds of the work to be. They are your tools, and you will imbue them with meaning, purpose and experience as you evolve with the system. In this sense the last section is dedicated to Skulda, the norn of the future/s, and the magick of what should be, will be, and is manifest in living flesh.

What is the meaning of each rune?

There are plenty of books which try to tell you. Most of them give a garbled summary of the various rune poems, phrased, in simple words so the result-hungry won't get indigestion. Such explanations (A = B) are not worth much. While it may be true that A can be B on occasion, B need not be all there is to A. For one thing, the rune poems occasionally contradict each other. All of them were composed in periods when rune writing was approaching oblivion and the church was down on all pagan traditions. There are also ethnic differences between them. We may say; 'this'is what runes meant in Iceland at the time when this poem was composed,' but this hardly suits conditions on the continent several centuries earlier, when runes were more of a sacred mystery, and less of a system of writing·things down.

For instance in the Old English poem the Uruz rune refers to the aurox, a beast which had become extinct some centuries earlier, but still featured greatly in mythology and legend. The Old Norse rune poem, a few centuries later ignores the aurox and replaces it with the more common totem of the reindeer. Still later the Old Icelandic rune poem appeared, ignoring both beasts and resurrecting another old theme; the connection of Uruz with Urda's well of purification, in the glyph of 'rainshower' and 'drizzle'. Still more confusing and fascinating is the mixup of the yew tree and the sedge grass in the rune signs, Eihwaz, Algiz, or the way the Ansuz rune appears in three variations in the Old English poem. Clearly, a simple 'A = B' is impossible.

You might begin by forgetting *the* meaning of the runes. Over the centuries, each rune has had several meanings, many of which we probably do not know about today. Much more important than the traditional interpretation is the meaning the runes have for you. If you have done some of the exercises, you may have come to some sort of practical understanding of posture, chant, flow and the like. Now I would ask you to connect the rune practice with the rune wisdom which rests in your deep mind, so that the outer forms are clearly connected to the inner force fields of power, joy, understanding and self-realization. To do so, here are some simple practices which allow your deep mind to tell you what each rune is good for.

1. Passive meditation.

To make you more receptive to the messages of the deep mind, a light trance state is required. This trance level is often called 'alpha' as the brain shows the characteristic 'alpha-waves' when in it. You know this state from experience, whether you are aware of it or not. The alpha level is a comfortable state of half sleep and half wakefulness. There are dozens of ways of going into alpha. Most of them make use of relaxation and repetition. If you have never done this before, I suggest you find a competent meditation teacher or experiment as follows:

a) Go to a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.

b) Jump around for a few minutes, do some mild physical exercises, stretch the sinews, rotate the hips etc. This loosens body up and makes the energy flow, and relaxation easier.

c) Lie down on the ground. A bed is not recommended as you should not drift into sleep but retain a measure of wakefulness. You may use a blanket and a pillow for comfort, and if you like, you could place a thin cloth over your eyes.

d) Move around a little until your posture feels comfortable.

e) Now it may help to ask your deep mind for help in inducing a pleasant and tranquil trance state.

f) Calm down. Allow your body to relax. Awareness may move through body, and will tell you which sections are tense. When you notice such tension, increase it (tense it more!) and then relax. Tense it again and relax it. If you do this a few times you will know how to let go.

g) Allow body awareness in the four elemental realms.

Earth - first comes . . . the realm of earth . . . of living earth . . . solid and firm . . . and as you think . . . of the earth . . . as it supports you . . . you can feel . . . how heavy your body is . . . and how it rests . . . calm and relaxed . . . and how your weight . . . is on the ground . . . and your body . . . is like the earth . . . the flesh is like earth . . . and the bones are like stone . . . and you feel yourself . . . resting in peace . . . one with the earth . . . living and peaceful earth . . . the earth you love . . . and live with . . . and as you feel . . . how comfortable . . . and heavy . . . your body can be . . . you realize . . . how good it is . . . to rest . . . and relax

> . . . and enjoy . . . and you sense . . . that you are floating . . . into a deep trance . . .
>
> **Water** And as you you flow . . . and float . . . you remember . . . the fluids . . . in your body . . . and in the world . . . the waters . . . that flow . . . and circulate . . . you might remember . . . the flowing . . . and fluid element . . . the water . . . that flows . . . in rivers . . . and in streams . . . giving moistness . . . and nourishment . . . and there is water . . . in body . . . which circulates . . . and refreshes . . . and as you float . . . deeper into trance . . . you feel your blood . . . as it streams . . . and flows . . . and circulates . . . and you realize . . . that the fluid . . . washes through you . . . that the blood pulse . . . is steady . . . and even . . . and that you feel comfortable . . . in this trance state.
>
> **Fire** So you arrive . . . in the realm of fire . . . there is fire . . . in the sun . . . and there is fire . . . in the centre . . . of the earth . . . and there is warmth . . . body is warm . . . warm and comfortable . . . as it rests . . . the warmth . . . spreads through you . . . living warmth . . . gentle energy . . . and perhaps . . . you perceive . . . how the warmth . . . the inner glow . . . spreads from the solar plexus . . . from heart . . . and liver . . . radiant . . . a bright and shining . . . glowing sensation . . . of energy . . . and joy . . . keeping you warm . . . and comfortable . . . all body . . . warm and aglow . . . you feel well . . . and the energy . . . keeps the system . . . whole and healthy . . . as you go deeper . . . and deeper . . . into trance . . .
>
> **Air** And to . . . the realm of air . . . wind flows . . . as breath flows . . . under a wide sky . . . and as you feel . . . the lungs moving . . . and breath flows . . . out and in . . . out and in . . . the trance gets deeper . . . you feel . . . the gentle motion . . . of the lungs . . . and hear . . . how your breath . . . whispers . . . and flows . . . like the wind . . . free wind . . . clear air . . . an open sky . . . your breath flows . . . in gentle rhythm . . . and with each breath . . . the ch'i flows . . . and body . . . feels so good . . . and with each . . . outflow and inflow . . . the trance gets deeper . . . much deeper . . . and you are . . . comfortable and calm . . . and ready . . . to leave body . . . your body . . . gets along well . . . the system . . . works in unity . . . so your mind . . . is now free . . . to perceive . . . and sense . . . the deep mind . . . the unconscious realm . . . the world . . . of the spirits . . . and you know . . . and remember . . . that trance states . . . are pleasant . . . and that you may come . . . into your trance state . . . anytime you will . . . as trance is easy . . . and natural . . . and your deep mind . . . likes to be . . . in touch with you . . . that trance . . . can be . . . like coming home . . . and that . . . you can learn . . . what you have really . . . always known . . . you are . . . at home . . . within yourself . . . and with the spirits . . . you are whole.[1]

This sort of text is an example of the metaphors and manners of speech that can be useful to ease the body and induce trance. Try to read this text aloud to get acquainted with it. Each ' . . . ' signifies a pause, so that the words, which you speak, in a calm and slow and gentle voice, are very few, and that you get a chance to calm down. Ideally, you will learn how to speak freely in this system. When your learn this method of trance induction, give yourself plenty of time. Repeat the words in you inner voice as you rest on the ground, and try to see what you say, hear what you say, feel what you say. Going in and out of trance ought to be practised daily for at least a month before you proceed. You will soon find out how to improve the process, and trance will come easy and naturally to you. You will progress faster if you are wise enough to proceed slowly.

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[1] Consider what difference the address 'you' or 'I' makes to this practice.

h) How to come out of trance. Try something like this, allowing the words to come more quickly as you approach the end of the trance:

> . . . and now . . . after this meditation . . . I want . . . to return . . . to waking consciousness . . . to wake up . . . to the world . . . and so . . . I give my thanks . . . for this valuable . . . and vitalizing experience . . . and return . . . awareness into body . . . I feel my flesh . . . and the breath flow . . . is getting stronger . . . the breath flow . . . going out and in . . . is increasing . . . and as breath . . . supplies more air . . . I feel . . . that I am waking . . . that the blood . . . flows . . . swifter now . . . and I begin . . . to move body . . . stretch my arms . . . and stretch my legs . . . feel . . . that I am waking . . . deeper breaths. Aaah! Now I arrive . . . and wake up . . . eyes open . . . hello! Awake now!

I recommend that you move your body as you wake, take deep breaths, stretch arms and legs and open your eyes only when you are awake again. Sit up but stay seated for a moment or two. This is important for two reasons:

For one thing, it is sound practice to give a clear and definite beginning and end to your trances. This may help your mind to know just when each consciousness is wanted. Ringing a bell or clapping hands are excellent signals for this. For the other, it may happen that you relax so deeply that your body goes to sleep. In this case your breath-rate and your circulation will be slow, and it is not good to jump up too quickly. Perhaps you may think that this is an overly complicated way of going into trance. True, there are simpler ways. In some systems of meditation, you are simply given a key word, usually in Sanskrit. Then you sit or lie down and repeat your key word once with each breath. As you do so, you imagine that with each repetition, you are sinking deeper into trance.

Another way is to count breath. You start with 100 and count slowly backwards till you arrive at zero, and a good trance state. Each breath is one number down, as if you were in a lift. These methods are wonderfully simple and work so well that they have been exploited commercially by some organizations. However, they tend to dull the mind. Once you get used to them you may find that they are too easy, and that your attention goes elsewhere. The more complicated method given above is a mixture of four-element cosmology plus hypnotic speech patterns. It is very flexible, can be adapted to any system and belief, and induces (with a measure of practice) much deeper trance states than the more mechanical methods. For an excellent introduction to speech patterning see the works of Milton Erickson, Richard Bandler and John Grindler. Your should spend some time making your body relaxed, warm, comfortable, with free breathing in order to move your attention elsewhere. When the body is comfortable, it will rest easily and free us to deal with the mind. If we ignore our bodies by concentrating on mind alone (which happens in the simple methods) it can easily happen that the body may intrude and trouble us. Others try to get past this obstacle by forcing the body to stay completely motionless. Using this method you could spend several months in the frustrating act of trying to be as motionless as a stone. Of course the body would fight it, and produce cramps, twitches, itches, and whatnot, all of which can be unpleasant. What is really needed is a comfortable trance state in which the body rests easily and does not disturb our magick. In a good trance, this happens naturally. Your deep mind can do this for you, and easily. It does so every night when you fall asleep. Now we don't have to be as stiff and tranquil as a corpse for this purpose. When we dream and sleep, the body is also in motion from time to time, and requires these motions to stay comfortable. People who do not move in their sleep, such as comatose alcoholics, tend to suffer numbness and paralysis of the limbs they slept on.

Sometimes muscles will tense or twitch a little, and this is quite right. Thus, if your body needs some movement while you are in trance, it's all right and much better to allow this than to spend energy and effort trying to prevent it. It's better to scratch and be done with it, than to waste minutes trying to ignore or fight an itch. These words are written - with a friendly laugh - for all the devotees of obscure yoga systems who have been taught that the 'real' trances only take place when the yogi is seated in some bizarre posture without any motion, stiff like a corpse for hours. Now this sort of thing may be an impressive performance in itself, or maybe it can happen as a side effect when mind is busy elsewhere. It is not obligatory. When body is comfortable and at rest - and this is easier in a natural posture on the ground than seated in some cramped asana - it won't bother us. The advanced trance-magician should be able to go into a deep and pleasant trance in any comfortable posture, as well as dancing, walking or seething.

2. Rune Meditation

This is quite simple. When you are deep and comfortable in your trance, imagine one of the runes. You might imagine it glowing in lines of light. If you find this difficult, try to augment the vision with the sense of touch - how does that sign feel? Or sound - can you hear the rune name? Some find it easier to imagine the rune as a solid object (carved out of wood, for example), while others imagine that they sing its name to get the vision going. When you imagine sight, sound and feeling at once, you will get a strong representation. As you focus on the rune, observe any ideas that arise. For those who find it difficult, here are a few hints:

> 'And as I float . . . in this trance . . . I perceive . . . clear and vivid . . . the shape of the rune . . . and I see . . . its form . . . in lines of light . . . and as I see . . . the image of — . . . I can hear myself . . . vibrating its name . . . the call rings out . . . and I can feel . . . that the vision . . . is strong . . . and the power . . . flows through the sign . . . and makes contact . . . so that the deep mind . . . knows what I ask . . . and reveals . . . to me . . . the nature . . . of the rune . . . and shows . . . what I know . . . deep within . . . visions arise . . . dreams arise . . . and as I focus . . . on the rune___ . . . its meaning unfolds . . . so I may see . . . and hear . . . and feel . . . that I may recognize . . . and remember . . . that there are messages . . . in each rune . . . and important insights . . . which I ask . . . the deep mind . . . to reveal now . . . '

Others use a curtain. They go into trance several times to establish (imagine) a curtain. They see it, feel it, hear the cloth and make the vision real. Once the curtain is well established and easy to imagine, they draw the rune shape on it, vibrate the name and feel the energy. When the rune is clear, they pull open the curtain and observe what is shown behind it. When the vision is over, they close it again. Erase the rune, give thanks and return to the waking world. Perhaps you don't like the idea of a curtain. In this case try it with a door. Others spend a week imagining a mirror or pool. When the imagination is real, they project the rune into its depths and watch what comes out.

Maybe the visions were directly inspired by the rune, so you may congratulate yourself. Maybe they contained interruptions by Helja knows what ideas and memories. This method is passive, and you are open to receive all sorts of stuff. If the things that come up seem unrelated to the rune, concentrate on the rune shape, sound, and energy. If you do this well, the power of the rune will banish unwanted ideas. Please note that it is not for your conscious mind to decide what is adequate and what ought to be banished. The rune power will decide that, and will produce a field that throws out all alien elements. Some of the visions may be shocking. If Teiwaz gives you visions of crisis and bloodletting, for instance, it may not be pleasant, but it will certainly be appropriate. You are in trance *to learn something new from your deep mind*, and what your ego says to it is of no importance whatsoever. If you doubt the validity of your vision, concentrate on the rune. When you have worked with the runes in this state for a while you may learn how to see rune messages in waking consciousness also. This is a matter of practice. Don't count on instant results: the inner senses have to be developed. You can use this method if you want to work with a partner. Lie down, relax, and slow down until you develope a good trance. Maybe your partner could talk you into trance, or tell you long stories of ancient forests and primal rune alignments which reveal themselves everywhere. When you are comfortable and deep in trance, you partner asks your deep mind which runes it wants to reveal. You wait until you receive an answer. Then tell your partner which rune you have selected - making sure you both know which one you're talking about. If necessary describe its shape and name. Next your partner assumes the posture and chants, vibrates or whispers the rune name a couple of times. Tune in to the sound and sensation. What ideas are raised? Now your partner earths the energy, and sits down to wait. Experience confirms that it is uncomfortable to continue with a given rune stance for as long as the other person needs to learn. Simply continue to learn from that rune until you feel satisfied. When you are ready signal it to your partner, who may then ask your deep mind to select another rune. This method has the advantage that it is the deep mind, not the conscious mind that selects the rune and provides the vision. We get very little conflict this way, indeed it may happen that your deep mind is so eager to cooperate, that your problem is choosing one of many to explore first.

3. Astral projection

Now we come to the real goodies. The last method was largely passive. True, you actively induced a trance state and true, you actively invoked a rune in sight, sound and feeling, but everything that came out of it was a matter of receiving. An active alternative is the time honoured method of astral projection. Start with an open mind. Maybe you have read about astral projection before. Most of what you have read will certainly be dubious rubbish describing in fine esoteric prose things that the authors have no direct experience of. If you expect astral projection to be like that, based only on gossip and hearsay, you may be in for some disappointments. This is what happened to me. Some of those authors say that in astral projection the 'soul' is 'completely outside of the body', possibly connected with it by a 'silver cord'. In my youthful enthusiasm, I tried more than 250 times to get 'completely out of my body', in various trance states, which simply did not work. Nowadays I know that the 'out of the body experience' is a metaphor.

We do not need to be 'outside' of the body. It is quite sufficient to be unaware of the body, or to forget it in the practice, as our attention moves to other realms. The 'astral plane' is a term for the land of dreams and imagination. This is not really a land, it is not even a place, but a state of awareness. This state of awareness, like everything else, is a function of the mind. We don't have to go 'out of the body' to contact it as it is not a physical place to go to. As we grow more aware of the astral world, we will equally tend to forget or ignore our bodies. Maybe our awareness will function in both realms, or maybe you will notice that your body moves or requires adaptation of posture from time to time.

Traditional occultists would demand an 'either body or mind' division of sentience. This stupid idea caused the 250-odd failures, as I was so intent on being fully 'outside' that my struggle served to increase body consciousness which in turn disturbed astral, i.e. imagination awareness. Had I ignored the demand for a full split, the journey would have taken place much more easily, and before long I would have been so interested in the astral world that body would have been forgotten anyway. This is what happens when we try to learn something and expect our experience to accord with dusty old dogma. Other authorities state that during astral projection, the body gets stiff and cold, like a plank of wood, and that this is the proof that we are 'really outside'. If this happens I would consider it a side effect. Any introverted trance tends to product such effects, if you spend an hour at it.

However there are people who are very active during astral projection. Many shamans, especially those of Nepal, when they wish to 'travel to the underworld' in the quest for a spirit, a lost soul of a client, or for self-discovery, unlike the popular image, these sorcerers fly through the astral while their bodies remain seated. Many keep up a fast drum-beat while they are travelling. And some manage to sing an account of the journey simultaneously. When things happen, their body may sway, or shudder, or jerk about, then they may collapse and lie motionless, and suddenly leap up again to continue with the working. This, if anything, is firm proof that astral projection does not necessarily require a full dissociation of body and mind, and can be worked in numerous states between.

The important issue in astral projection is that your attention moves largely into the dream-land. If you retain some of your body awareness this is alright, and sometimes it can be useful, if you wish to drum or speak during the event. The 'silver cord' so popular in Theosophical literature is another metaphor. Some people like to imagine that they are in connection with their physical body, and so they imagine a silver safety line. Some say that the astral body, i.e. your body of imagination, has to be like the physical body. This is also nonsense. The astral is a representation of the deep mind in terms of imagination. The worlds you encounter are imaginary, and the body you inhabit in the journey is equally imaginary. In some worlds (or 'parts of your deep mind'), a human form can be a serious limitation.

In the *Ynglingasaga* we are told:

Odin could change his shape;
His body would rest as in sleep or death
But he became bird or beast, fish or worm,
To travel instantly to far countries,
In his own or other people's interest.

In some of the darker realms of the astral, it may be useful to change into beast spirits or into some formless state of non-being. A common Maatian metaphor is to change into a 'black flame of voidness', which works wonders should you consider yourself not as a thing, but an absence. In other realms of chaos, the mode of integration is to become the entity which you encounter.

Another misconception says that astral projection is difficult. While it may be true that certain parts of the astral world (or the deep mind) are difficult to reach, this certainly does not go for all of them. Let me give a very un-occult example. In modern psychotherapy, there is a school of astral projection which is called *Katathymes Bilderleben* and was developed by H. Leuner as a form of active imagination or daydreaming. First, the client is allowed to sit or lie comfortably. The therapist may give some help so that the client relaxes well. When this is achieved - and it does not have to be a deep trance - the therapist asks the client to imagine a meadow. What sort of a meadow? When you think of a meadow it won't be the same meadow I am thinking of. It may be a large or a small meadow, one with flowers or tall grasses perhaps. There may or may not be animals in it, it may be healthy or poor growth, it may be on the slopes of a mountain or just a tiny lawn in the front garden. All of this is left to the client.

Now the client is asked to describe the meadow, to say what is seen, felt, or heard, and in the process of description the meadow usually gets more solid and real. The same thing happens when a shaman describes the 'under or overworld' in the process of travelling. Now the therapist asks the client to move around on the meadow, to discover more of it, and soon enough the client is busy walking through the imagination as if it were the material world. As Katathymes Bilderleben is a therapeutic process, we won't be surprised to find that many clients encountered trouble. Some find their meadow polluted, or fenced in, or diseased. And when they encounter such troubles, it's part of the therapy to find solutions to them, to open the fence for example. The therapist, by the way, should not offer directions. The client has to find solutions, and as health is restored within, the same will happen in the outer world. Now this method offers a series of journeys into several environments. The meadow is just the initial experience. Other therapeutic journeys involve: 'follow a stream to the sea', 'climb a high mountain', 'come down from your high mountain', 'find a house and go exploring in it', 'go to the edge of a forest'. When the patient explores these psycho-active environments, s/he actively experiences parts of the mind which are usually unconscious. When the stream, for example, is blocked, the client gets a chance to clear up the obstruction, which gives a powerful message to the deep mind. Mountain-climbing is wonderful to find out about ambition and self-estimation. In the house, forgotten treasures may be found, and at the edge of the forest, dwellers of the twilight may appear.

More advanced journeys involve encounters with wild beasts, archetypal figures, caves and swamp-holes. Please bear in mind that the above is therapy, not analysis. The therapist is there to produce a state of consciousness in which the client may directly encounter and communicate with the deep mind, using the medium of active imagination. The less the therapist interferes the better. It is a curious fact that people who practise Katathymes Bilderleben or KB for short, over a time may run into guiding, guarding or helping persons or beings in their journeys. Such figures are often speakers or messengers for various parts of the deep mind. The same thing happens in shamanism, when the shamans fly to the otherworld to meet their gods and spirits in that environment.

What do we learn from KB? That it is possible, and sometimes more efficient to function in the astral and the physical at once; to journey in the imagination and to speak of it simultaneously. That astral projection can be easier and more natural than many 'occult authorities' would have it. That the astral environment accords with consciousness. In astral projection, we are communicating with our deep minds, and effect changes through this interaction. Here is a basic structure for astral projection.

a) Go into trance. Use some method that feels comfortable to you. As you lie down and relax deeply the awareness of the outside world is dissociated (i.e. you ignore and forget it) while you associate (connect yourself) with body awareness. Release any tension, regulate your posture, breathe slowly and so on, until a pleasant and deep trance is reached.

b) When the trance is deep enough, body is free to care for itself and your awareness is free to go elsewhere. This means that you dissociated body awareness and associate with astral awareness, i.e. imagination. Some do this by imagining that they are outside of their body and see it (however diffuse) on the ground.

c) Now you imagine a door, gate, curtain, tunnel, hole, or opening, which will be your passage into the astral world. When your image of it is clear and vivid, you imagine that you pass through and close the opening or gate from the other side. This dissociates most of your body awareness and associates you with the astral.

d) Now you follow the passage, which may change as you move along, until you arrive at another gate or doorway, preferably of the astral world you wish to visit. The 'passage experience' is important, as it gives you opportunity to adapt more fully to the astral awareness of realms which are usually unconscious to you. If need be, the passage gives you excellent opportunities to change your body.

e) You open the new door and pass through into a magical world. As you turn around and close the door behind you, the passage-reality is dissociated. As you tune into the new world, you associate with it. Now, you may go on exploring.

f) Going back to body consciousness is usually done by returning along the same route. With experience, you may find or develop short-cuts, or change into some beast which flies very fast. Be careful that you close all doors behind you.

Now I hope that you are eager to try this out here and now. Of course I cannot tell you exactly what and how you should do it, as you are a person with unique talents and hangups. I don't know which symbols get you going, or how you can best make the transition from body awareness to imagination. You will have to experiment to find out. However, if it helps, I may describe how I usually travel to the rune worlds. Don't expect your experience to be quite like mine. Usually (not always) I begin by drawing a magick circle on the ground (using a length of rope), which helps to dissociate a great deal of everyday awareness and the world outside. Inside of the circle I do a little ritual, involving prayer, gesture and free chanting in chaos language. Then I vibrate the rune I desire to explore in the journey and assume its posture. Next I lie down on the ground, relax my body and go into a trance, much as it was described in the first exercise of this chapter.

I don't use the same method at all times, as this would make the practice dull, but introduce variations. When my body is quite comfortable, heavy, warm, relaxed and the breath flows easy and slow, I imagine that I am outside of it. Sometimes I imagine that I drift out of it like a cloud, or that I roll out of it sideways, or that I simply get up and stand in the air. The body I see on the ground is an imagined vision of myself in the circle. At this stage it is not a clear vision, as the imagination isn't quite solid enough yet, nor needs it to be. Sometimes I find my awareness leaping from body (ground) to body (imagination) and vice versa very fast. It's important to stay tranquil at this stage, to go gently and slow. Don't expect that you will be entirely 'outside', or that body awareness is fully dissociated. Instead, focus on the doorway. I work with several doors, which lead to various magical realities, such as temple rooms, cult caves of the ancient ones, halls that open into the night-sky, etc. These magical spaces were discovered and developed through years of magical practice. If imagined repeatedly, the astral environment can become surprisingly stable. For a rune journey, I go to a gate with a black curtain. Then I draw a symbol on the curtain in lines of light, and say a word. When the symbol is clear and well-defined, I imagine that I open the curtain. Welcome to Niflhel (fog-hell)!

Behind the door, the mists are rolling. I walk through, then turn around, close the curtain and draw the symbol. Now I turn *slowly* and begin to take in the scenery. The ground feels moist, as is the cold air around. Veils of fog are writhing over a desolate and half-hidden landscape full of twisting roots, coiling tubes, ancient rocks, and walking shadows in the twilight gloom. To get used to it, I sit down on some root or rock and see, hear and feel the scenery. This will make the vision clearer. My increased awareness ('What do I see? What do I feel? What do I hear?') associates more fully. After a while I go for a walk, have a chat with Helja or Nidhöger, perhaps do some magick and then proceed to my rune gate. This is a huge stone cliff rising out of the swirling fog. What will the rune gate be for you? A door, a tunnel, a gate, a spring or just a foxhole in the ground? It's part of the fun to find the right connections. Now I draw the rune sign on the stone, in lines of light, assume the proper posture, chant the name and focus on this calling until I sense that the idea has made contact, and that the proper world lies behind the stone. Then I leap into the rune sign, get spun around, and find myself elsewhere. This is another crucial moment. First I look at the gate through which I have come. It may look a little different from the other side. I draw the rune on it and sing its name.

Then I expand the vision. I look at the ground beneath, and at the frame of the gate, or rock, it is set in. Then I turn slowly, and sit down once again. I give myself time to get in tune with the new world. Perhaps the vision is a little unclear at first. It will get more solid the more awareness I give to it. If it doesn't, I assume the proper posture, vibrate the rune name, and use this energy to amplify the vision. Then I begin to walk around, to explore the new world. In a sense all aspects of my experience will reveal the nature of the rune sentience, the environment and atmosphere will describe the inner meaning of the rune, and so will all life forms which I encounter.

Often enough, rune journeys are lively experiences. We are not there as observers but have to act, to change, to do and communicate, so that the journey of discovery equals an initiation. Some of the entities of the realm may teach us sorceries, or special applications for each rune sign. You shouldn't expect these entities to be well-behaved. There are many curious creatures in the astral. Some of them may be friendly but some of them certainly won't. It can happen that you are cheated or attacked if you are not careful. Some of those beings will test you, challenge you, try to control you. In turn, you should test all beings that you meet. Blind trust is deadly in the astral, as it is far too easy to deceive oneself, to indulge in wishful thinking or to 'bloat' the ego with the dangerous 'oh how well I am doing!'

Let's say that you meet an angry giant, who begins communication by raising a huge axe. Now you might waste time saying 'Hello! I know that you are just imagination!' However, the same goes for you, which means that the giant is real enough, and that you had better act, preferably fast. This is the time for shape changing. You might grow, for instance, or turn yourself into a wild beast, or draw a dividing line with your magick sword. Or perhaps you draw the rune in the air, and intone its name. I don't know what will work: dare to experiment. Some mages do this by drawing a holy symbol in the air, and by saying a sacred word. You would do well to use a sign and word which really means a lot to you. In many cases hostile entities are banished through this act, or at least constrained to behave in a more friendly manner. Drawing the rune sign will tell you about the being's nature. If the being is a genuine dweller of that realm, the rune will make the vision clearer. If it is not, the sign will banish it. You can realize the nature of each astral entity by confronting it with a sign, word, gesture, that is vital to your magick. If it accepts the energy, it is probably in harmony with it. If it flinches, or tries to get away, it is of no use to you.

Now there are people who believe that we should trust anything we meet in the astral. Some say that testing is not polite, and only makes the spirits angry. I disagree with this. People who blindly trust any bit of imagination that comes their way have no way of distinguishing just what is a genuine expression of the deep mind and what is a creature constructed by the ego's need to feel self-important. If a given entity flatters you, be careful. Nema expresses this point very well:

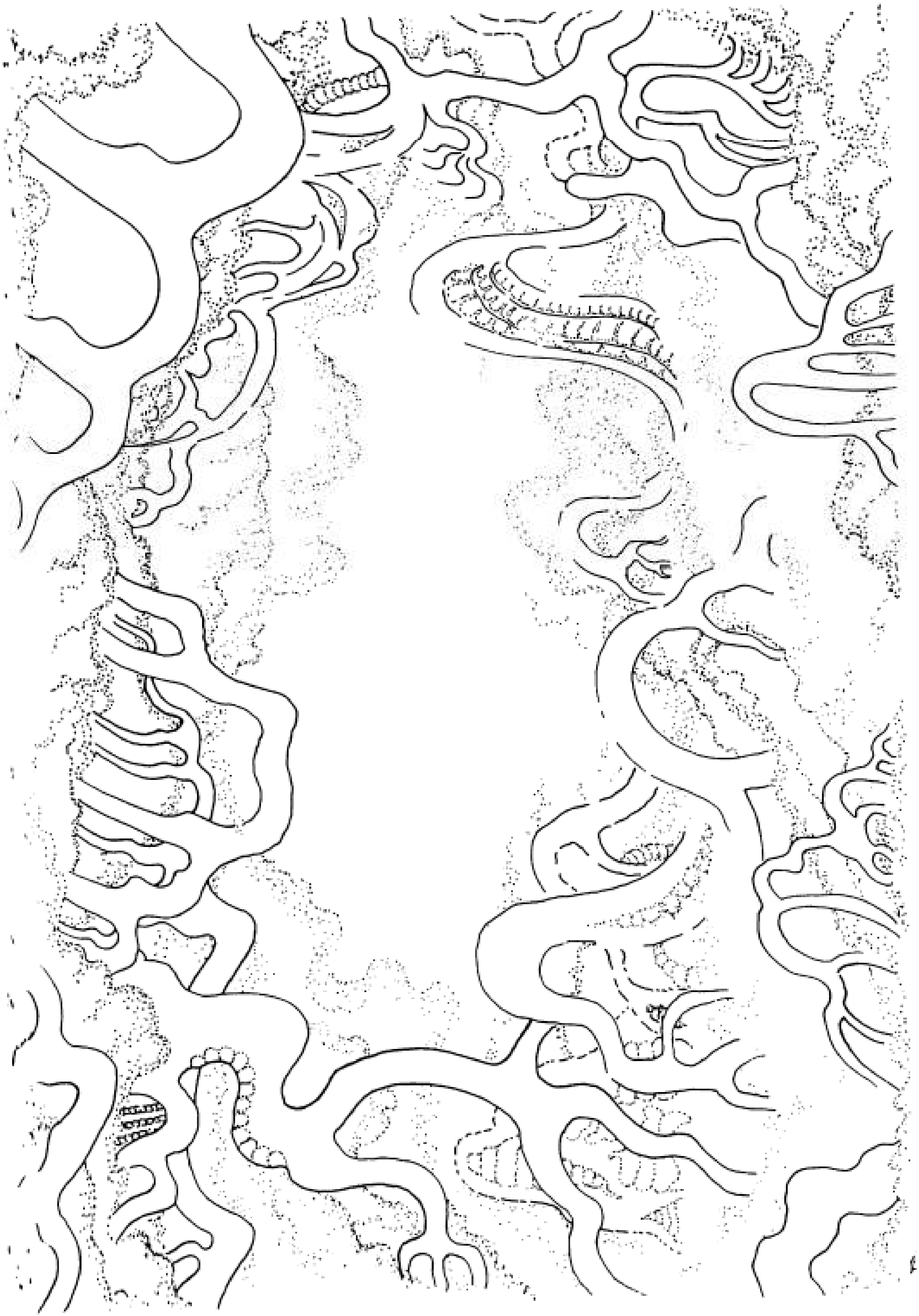
> 'Again, caution is urged. The fluidity of the astral planes renders proper verification of experience more difficult. One has to be able to recognize the nature of entities encountered on the astral planes during the encounter. Our allies are not offended by the presence of a diamond shield about the aura; like all surviving sentient beings, they have armour of their own.
>
> There is a simple method of 'field analysis' to determine the nature of an astral entity. Since Yesod reflects Tiphareth, the procedure is to radiate the essence of the sun of the hawk and the negative radiance of the black flame.

> The allies will match the radiance in tonal or harmonic frequencies; alien entities will flee or be rendered immobile. The radiance may be engendered by visualizing a sun-sphere bearing the Eye of Horus, and a black flame speckled with stars. Vibrate the mantram 'Lutis Nitra' and your astral body will emit the envisioned radiance.' (CJCM, Vol 1 No.5)

This particular technique makes use of the Maatian magical system. Replace the words and symbols by some from your own tradition, if they mean more to you.

Coming back from the rune world to the body usually goes by the same route. I take care to give my thanks for the experience, close the doors well behind me, and return to the flesh. Often it takes some time to wake my body, to get the circulation going, and to get up. Then I usually sing a little, before ending the working, opening the circle, and writing the journey down. Keeping a diary will help you to keep the memory vivid and clear. Using this, or a similar method, you can learn to explore any symbol, sign, glyph, or sigil that suits you. You don't have to know what it is good for: the deep mind will tell you by making an entire magical world out of it. Indeed it is a test for neophytes to travel into some unknown symbol. This book should supply hundreds of them.

For rune magick, I recommend that you visit each rune world at least three times and make careful notes of the event. You will notice that the journey gets much easier with each try. In my usual way to the rune worlds I tend to use Niflheim as a 'passage' or 'in-between' state. Perhaps this will also suit you (once you get used to the joys and horrors of the place) but probably it won't. I suggest you ask your deep mind to select some symbols, and then try them out, for who knows to which range of awareness they may lead? Maybe you will find that some worlds can easily be visited, and others are more difficult. This would indicated you are in tune with the former worlds. It would also tell you to give more attention to the others. Perhaps some of these worlds require more effort, or maybe you will have to come to terms with them (and the parts of the mind which they represent). Some worlds may even require healing, or transformation, and so maybe will you. It's part of the joy in such 'journeys in the spirit vision' that they can change the structures of your mind.



28

The Rune Companion

How To Use The Dictionary

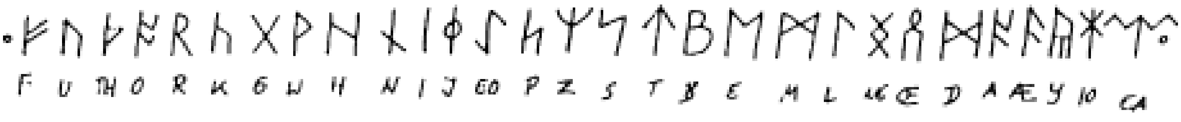
Each rune is introduced on a page bearing the rune poems, names, sign variations. My commentary follows immediately afterwards. This interpretation is loosely based on various word-roots, assorted ethnology plus a measure of my own visions. I have tried to keep my own ideas in the background. Nevertheless, they influenced the selection of possible word roots and symbols. I ask the reader not to believe them blindly but to do independent research. I am no linguist so there will probably be a number of misinterpretations in the etymology. If you know better, please write and correct me.

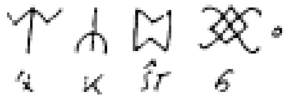
The ethnology is less speculative. I've had the pleasure of studying ethnology for a time, nevertheless you should bear in mind that such human sciences as history and ethnology are subject to human error, not to mention fashions and trends.

My principle authorities for etymology are *Der Grosse Duden vol. 7 Etymologie*, (Mannheim 1963); R Schützeichel: *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch* (Tübingen 1974); Heyne-Schückings: *Beowulf* III, Glossar/dictionary, (Paderborn 1961); Kock and Meissner: *Skaldisches Lesebuch* (Halle Saale 1931); *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston 1981) (appendix: Indo-European roots); K Simrock, *Translation of the Eddas* (1981, Wien, Heidelberg); Plus various bits and pieces gathered in the usual eclectic fashion. The rune texts come from three sources.

1. The Old English Rune Poem.

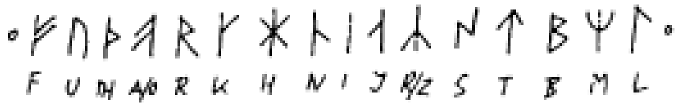
The manuscript (Cottonian MS Otho BX) is dated around 1000, though the poem is probably two centuries earlier. The original manuscript was lost in the fire of 1731. A copy, published by Hicks in his *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalum Thesaurus*, London 1705, survived. The rune signs themselves were not included, but have been preserved by a collector who carefully drew them at the side of the text. The rune poem describes 29 runes in verse.


F U TH O R K G W H N I J EO P Z S T B E M L NG Œ D A Æ Y IO EA

also the signs  are given, but without text

2. The Old Norse Rune Poem.

Published by Olaus Wormius in *Danica Literatura Antiquissima* (Amsterdam 1636) based on a manuscript from the Copenhagen University library. The original was lost in the fire of 1728, several transcripts survived. The text is dated around 1200 and describes the basic 16 runes of the Scandinavian system.



3. The Old Icelandic Rune Poem.

Based on four manuscripts in the Arnamagnean library in Copenhagen. The texts were written down around 1400, though they are probably older. The poem describes the usual 16 runes of the Viking period, ignoring the newly developed versions of ᛅ = Eh etc. The order varies in the manuscripts, ᛦ and ᛚ are often exchanged. Each of the verses ends with a keyword in Latin and old title for 'king' beginning with the rune letter.

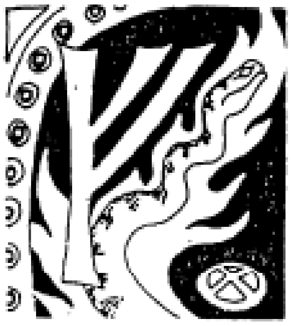
The three rune poems can be found in B. Dickins: *Runes and Heroic Poems* (Cambridge University Press 1915) and M. Halsall, *The Old English Rune Poem* (Toronto 1981).

The St Gallen rune texts, given in another chapter, come from *Aelteste Deutsche Dichtungen* (Insel Verlag 1964). The names and shapes of various runes can be found in R.W.V. Elliott *Runes* (Manchester 1959) and C.W. Thompson *Studies in Upplandic Runography* (University of Texas Press 1975) and C.A. Pushong *Rune Magic* (London 1978). Other relevant titles can be found in the bibliography.

The various symbols come from several volumes dealing with Paleolithic art and similar matters. These books are listed in the bibliography. I would like to note that these symbols were selected because of their similarity. It is in no way suggested that any given cave art symbol is a direct ancestor of a similar rune shape, or that our stone-age ancestors thought the same about their symbol as did later generations.

Abbreviations

P = Paleolithic period. Cave art between 35000 - 10000BC. Nomadic way of life, hunting-gathering, following the beasts.
N = Neolithic period. Agriculture, settlements, stationary society. The Neolithic is not a specific time but a phase of development. Agriculture was probably discovered in the Near East and spread slowly from South East Europe when the glaciers retreated.
NS = Neolithic Spain from c.7000BC.
NG = Neolithic Germany from c.5000BC.
NSC = Neolithic Scandinavia from c.2500BC.
MB = Megalith period, Brittany from c.4500BC.
NA = Neolithic Alps from c.5000BC. Close connection with Etruscan, see next entry.
ET = Etruscan, proto-Etruscan. Letters from the alphabet, by sound value.
PH = Phoenician. Source of Greek and Roman alphabets.
IE = Indo-European. This is a reconstructed language and is therefore always prefixed by the symbol *.
OHG = Old High German 700 - 1100.
MHG = Middle High German 1200 - 1500.
G = New High German from 1600.
OE = Old English.
ON = Old Norse.
OICE = Old Icelandic.
GR = Greek. GO = Gothic. F = French.



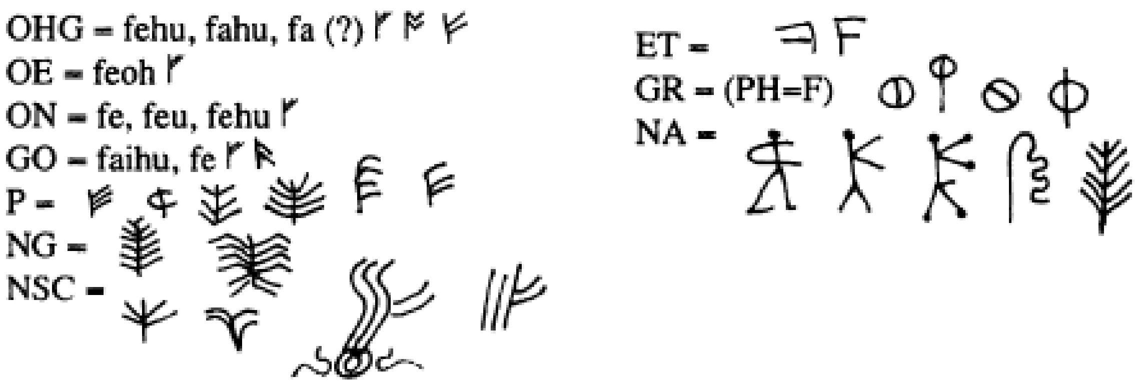
'Cattle' is the traditional interpretation of the Fehu rune.
The Indo-European root *Peku- is the basis for the OE *feoh, feo,* (cattle, property, treasure (related to 'fee')), the OHG *fehu, fihu, fieu* (= cattle, beasts) and the OICE *fe* (property, wealth). The shape of the rune may suggest the head of a horned beast, ᚠ which connects it with the fertility gods, Frey and Freya, who may still be found in the German words *Freude* (joy) *Freiheit* (freedom) *freien* (to woo) *Friede* (peace) and *Freund* (friend).

To the Northern Indo-European tribes cattle was an essential aspect of life. The cow or ox is a source of food, a worker on the fields and also the beast that pulls the heavy wagon on which the families lived during the migration years. The IE root **per-*, meaning 'forward', 'through' is the source of such words as 'forth', 'further', 'first', 'from'. Another word stream from the same root 'leading, to pass over', which can be found in OG **faro*, OE *faru* (to travel), OHG *faran* (to travel, to go), OHG *fuoren* (to lead). The cattle driven wagons of the Celtic and German migrations contained all the movable property. Bulls were often slaughtered as sacrifice to the gods, as on the island *Farra* (bull island) dedicated to Forsites. The cow Audhumla licked the first human from out of the ice.

Another idea links Fehu with the primal fire. The primal fire (G *Urfeuer*) is the flame of self (OE *feorh* = life, soul, spirit), the white flame of unity and the black flame of truth. The flame of many colours appears in OHG: *fagar* (brilliant, radiant) *fehen* (to colour, to dye), OE: *fah, fag* (colourful, radiant, bright) and OICE: *fa, faa* (to paint, colour), and *fagr*, (bright, beautiful).

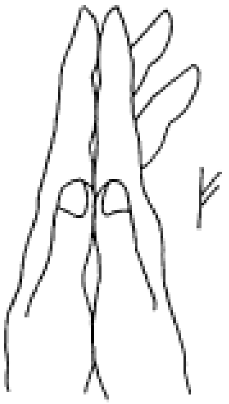
A third idea-stream connects with fighting, which is the logical outcome of all the great migration movements. **Pei-* (to hurt), **peik-* (to cut, mark) and a few similar IE roots attest to this, OE *feohte*, OHG *fehta* (to fight). Modern words such as fiend or foe come from this.

The frequent interpretation of fehu as 'cattle' is insufficient unless we understand the common source for these idea streams: it is the self-fire that expresses itself in the fight for survival, be it in stationary form (house, property, cattle, breeding, agriculture), in motion (migration, journeys) and in the usual warfare that enables invaders to win territory and to keep it.



The Old English Rune Poem
Feoh byth frofur
fira gehwylcum;
sceal ∂eah manna gehwylc
miclun hyt dœlan
gif he wile for drihtne
domes hleotan

Feoh is a comfort to all men;
yet must every man bestow it freely,
if he wish to gain honour
in the sight of the lord.



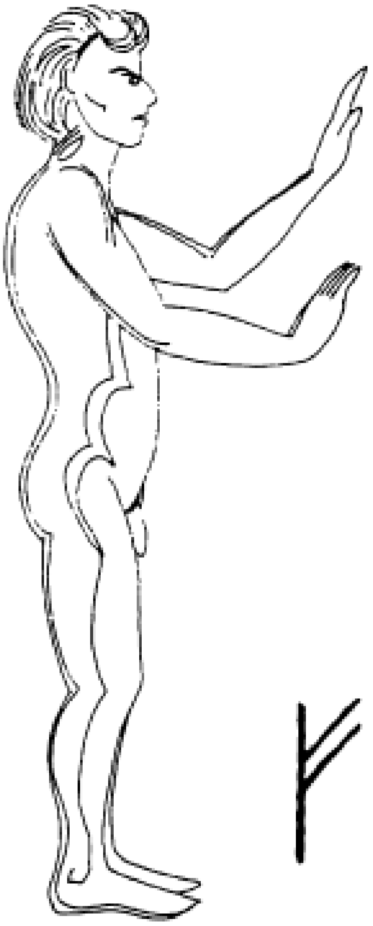
Rune stance and gesture

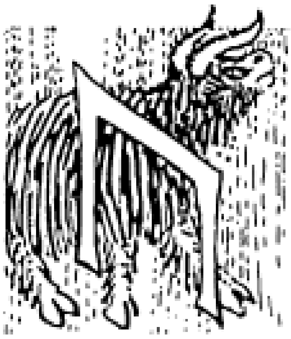
The Old Norse Rune Poem
Fé vældr frœnda róge;
fø∂esk ulfr i skóge

Fé is a source of discord among
kinsmen;
the wolf lives in the forest

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
Fé er frænda rog
ok flæ∂ar viti
ok grafsei∂s gata
aurum fylkir

fe = source of discord among kinsmen
and fire of the sea
and path of the serpent
aurum = gold.

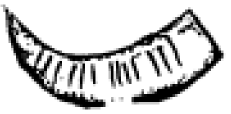




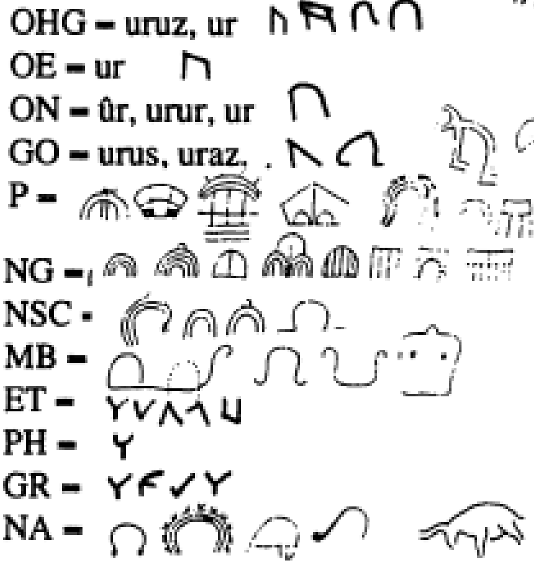
The Ur rune has many interpretations. As the *ur* or *aurox* it describes a species of wild oxen that is extinct nowadays. The Ur is not related to the cattle we know. It was a much larger animal, with a shoulder height of up to six feet and could not be domesticated. The aurox was famed for its courage and primeval wildness. Caesar gives an account of its chase; the beast was driven into traps and killed by young men who wished to prove their valour. This ceremonial hunt was probably a 'rite of passage' marking the beginning of manhood; the trophies, ie. the horns, were important for ceremonial drinking (symble). The shape of ᚢ may easily suggest the outline of the beast with its massive shoulders. It is interesting that the aurox, still known to the author of the Old English Rune Poem, was unknown in Scandinavia and Iceland by 1200. In the former the reindeer replaces the Ur, in the latter both beasts are unknown and the meaning changes to 'drizzle, rain'.

Some consider Ur as a reference to Urda's well. The prefix *ur* is used in German to denote things of great age, such as *Urzeit* (first time) *urtümlich* (original) *Ursprung* (source), *Urteil* (verdict), *Urknall* (big bang) or the OHG *Urtiefel*, the arch-devil. The three Norns, described in chapter nine, all go back to the IE roots **werad-*, branch, root, and **werdh-*, to grow, become. *Wyrd* describes both fate and disposition, which comes from **uer-* to turn, wind, bend, weave, become. The same as ON *orlog*, OHG *urlag* = ancient law. Urda's well, as is told by the *Edda*, restores to health, life and simplicity, washing away the troubles and pains and revealing the essential self. The same purification is reflected in the reference to dross which is the waste that comes out of iron in the process of smelting.

Drizzle and rain are both cleansing showers that fall from the heavens. If we turn the rune around we find a simplified horn from which the waters of life may be drunk, reflected perhaps in the OHG words *urlosa* (redemption) *urristi* (resurrection) *urruns* (rising) *urrunst* (beginning) *urspring* (source, well) *ursach* (first thing, ie. the root or reason for everything else). The rune posture is used to let go (of trouble, pain, sorrow) to bend to the deep and to resurrect the primal power of life and wildness. Two of my friends placed their hands on each other's shoulders to form this rune, and were able to seethe quite energetically whilst doing so.



The cleansing aspect is indirectly touched by the association of the horn with the moon: the Venus of Laussel (see illustration) carries a horn with 13 notches, which may refer to 13 lunar periods and 13 times of monthly bloodletting. The horn that appears aggressive in the aurox is receptive and good for drinking once it has been won. The symbolism is complex, I suggest you get yourself a drinking horn and settle down for a drink and meditation. This is what 'symble' ceremonies are all about.



The Old English Rune Poem

Ur byth anmod
ond oferhyrned
felafrecne deor
feohteth mid hornum
mære morstapa
Thaet is modig wuht.

Ur is proud and has great horns;
it is a very savage beast
and fights with its horns;
a great ranger of the moors,
it is a creature of mettle.

The Old Norse Rune Poem

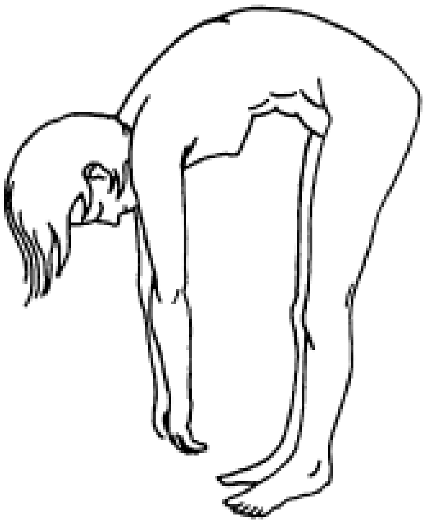
Úr er af illu jarne
opt løypr ræinn a hjarne

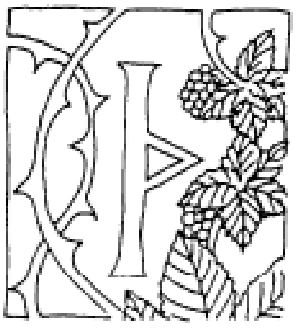
Dross comes from bad iron
the reindeer often races over frozen snow.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

Ur er skyja grátr
ok skára thverrir
ok hirðis hatr
umbre visi.

Ur is lamentation of the clouds
and ruin of the hay harvest
and abomination of the shepherd
umbre comes from imbre – shower.





The **Thorn** is one of nature's ways of protecting her fruits. Thornwalls have been used as barriers as long as human beings worked the fields and lived in villages. A girdle of thorn bushes used to protect every village and settlement, a hedge that divided the known universe from the dangerous and unknown realm beyond. The German 'dorf' and the English 'thorpe' both mean 'small village' and go back to the image of the thorn. Hedges were used to divide fields, sometimes even frontiers were fortified with thorn walls, such as the German/Danish border when it ran across the island Sylt.

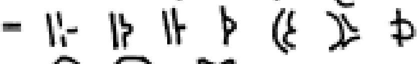
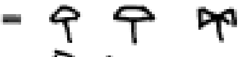
Thorns offer division, restriction, protection, separation. They are sharp against intruders and offer berries and fruit to settlers. The word 'thorn' goes back to the roots **(s)ter-*, stiff, hard, **ter-*, to get over, break through, overcome (which is found in 'through' and 'drill'), possibly also **ter-*, **(s)tene-*, (to thunder).

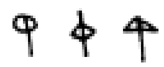
The ᛁ variation of the rune, found in the St Gallen manuscript could resemble the image of Donar/Thor's hammer. Donar/Thor was an agricultural deity who fertilized the fields and drove giants away, establishing order and law. The wall of thorns, mentioned in some fairy tales, becomes a threat to the community if it is too open or too closed. In the enclosed thorn wall the people 'fall asleep' while the centuries flew by.

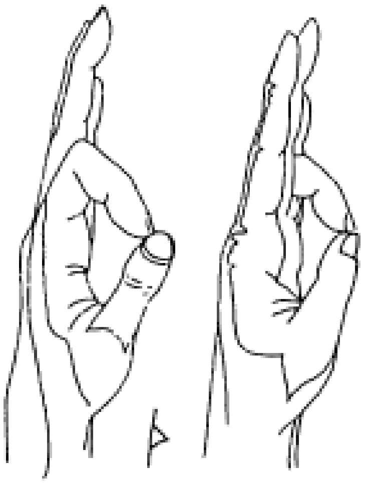
Now the rune is also called *Thurs*, which is an old name for the giants. The giants are a symbol for the primitive and obsessive drives that threaten the order of the world, possibly *thursa* connects with the OHG *thurfan*, which means 'oppressive need, necessity, desire, drive.' The ᚦ is called 'Hrugnirs heart' in the *Edda*, it is invoked to bind, restrict and control. Whether the thorn wall binds or protects depends on the situation and one's ability to pass through the barrier at will.

Merlin, who was spellbound into a hawthorn hedge by his beloved Nimue could nevermore leave his prison... but then he also became immortal, as being 'out of time', conscious through all the ages.

The *hagzissa* or witch, is a 'hedgesitter' who has learned to pass through the barrier and to connect the needs of the village (conscious mind) with the unknown world beyond (the collective sub-consciousness). That the passage can be dangerous and painful needs hardly be mentioned.

OHG = thurisaz, thorn ᚦ ᚦ ᚹ ᛏ ᚦ
OE = thorn ᚦ ᚦ
ON = thuris, thurisar, thurs ᚦ
GO = thauris, thyth ᚦ 𐌸
P = 
NSC = 
ET = ᛒ ▷
PH = ⊕

GR = ⊕ ⊙ ⊗ Ⓗ
NA = 



The Old English Rune Poem

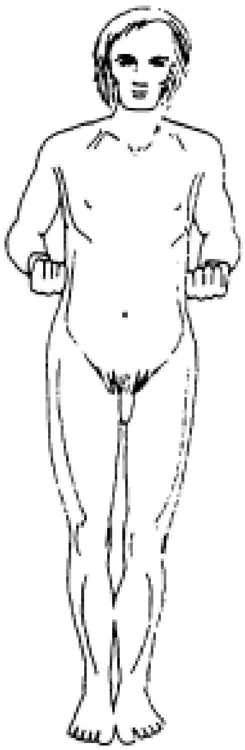
Thorn by th∂earle scearp;
∂egna gehwylcum
anfeng ys yfyl
ungemetum rethe
manna gehwylcum
∂e him mid reste∂

Thorn is exceedingly sharp;
an evil thing for any knight to touch
uncommonly severe on all
who sit among them.

The Old Norse Rune Poem

Thurs vældr kvinna kvillu;
katr vær∂r far af illu.

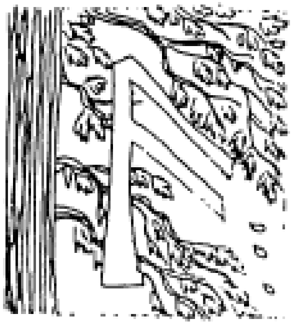
Thurs causes anguish to women
misfortune makes few men cheerful



The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

Thurs er kvenna kvöl
ok kletta bui
ok var∂runar verr
saturnus thengill

Thurs = torture of women
and cliff dweller
and husband of a giantess.

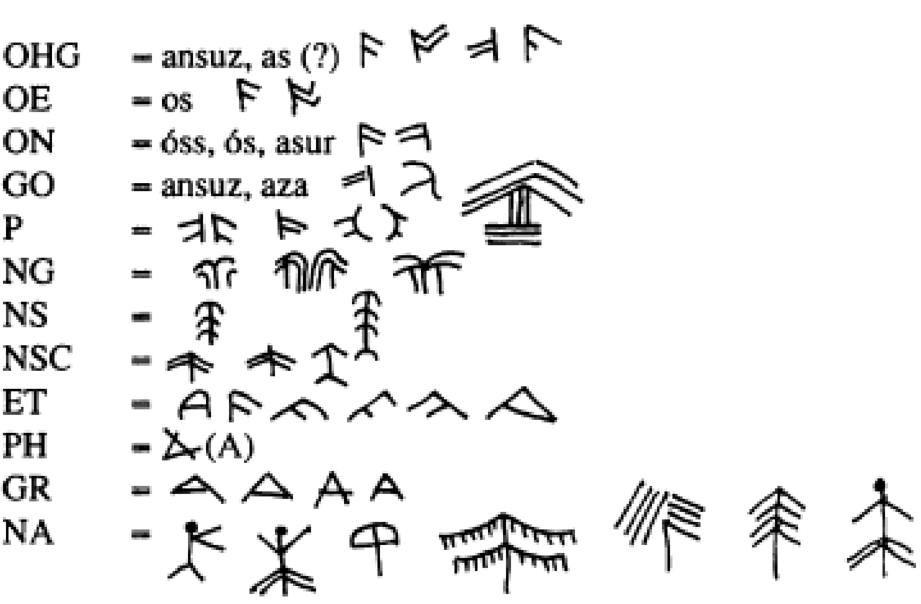


The **Os** rune has to do with the gods. The word *Aesir*, name of the ruling tribe of gods, is connected with it. The OICE *Oss* has three meanings, the Aesir, the height of a mountain and the '1' on a dice. The modern word 'ace' comes from this. According to some authors, the words 'ass' (singular) and Aesir (plural) go back to the ash tree, which is **os*- in Indo-European, OHG *ask*, OE *aesc*, ON *askr*. The word 'ass', they say, used to mean 'supporting pillar', which was a tent pole in the early days and the central pillar in the great hall in the days of agriculture. The meaning of the world-ash, connecting heaven and earth, is a central theme in the *Edda*.

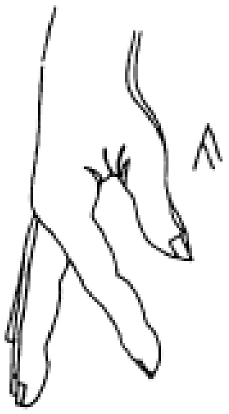
Another meaning of the rune has to do with speech. Wodan/Odin has his essential initiation hanging from the world-ash, sacrificed to himself, and finding freedom in a scream, then in the speech of the runes. Wodan's name is rooted in OHG *wuot* (crazy, in rage), GO*wods* (obsessed), OE *wod* (sound, voice, song) and OICE *odr* (poetry). The IE root: **os*- means 'a mouth', and the rune refers to speech, communication, breath, words and silence, to the wind that flows through the branches of the tree, (the original 'Woide' was a storm god, leader of the wild hunt) and to 'the same mouth' by which the vision is shared, the nectar joined and life exhausted into the beyond.

In the IE root **ansu*- we encounter the rather vague meaning 'god, demon, spirit', and perhaps the original phenomenon was savage enough to fall into all three categories, but in the refined form of the rune poems the reference is definitely to Odin, lord of Valhalla. Odin's principal weapon, the spear of will, is also related to the world-ash; OHG *asck* = spear, OHG *asca* = ashes. It seems likely that the original world ash was a mountain ash or rowan. This tree spread over Europe as soon as the glaciers melted and was replaced by the modern ash tree at a much later age.

The three aspects of the tree, Yggdrassil 'horse of the terrible one', Mimameith 'Mimir's tree', and Laerad 'giver of peace' are treated in chapter nine.



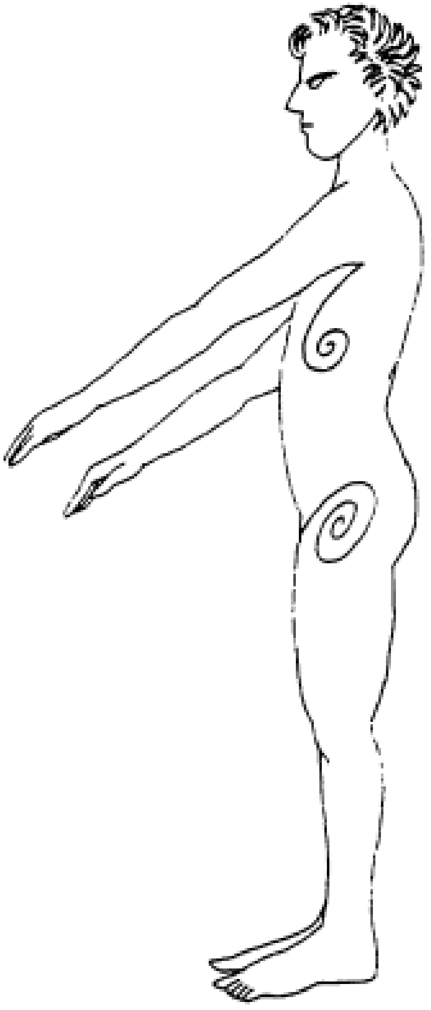
OHG = ansuz, as (?)
OE = os
ON = óss, ós, asur
GO = ansuz, aza
P =
NG =
NS =
NSC =
ET =
PH = (A)
GR =
NA =



The Old English Rune Poem

Os byth ordfruma
ælere spræce
wisdomes wrathu
ond witena frofur
and eorla gehwam
eadnys ond tohiht.

Os is the source of all language,
a pillar of wisdom
and a comfort to wise men,
a blessing and a joy
to every knight.



The Old Norse Rune Poem

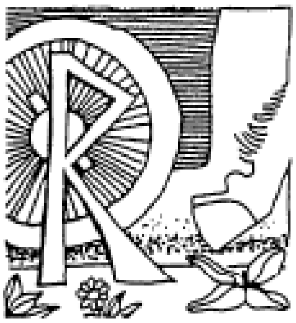
Óss er flæstra faer∂a
for; en skalpr er svær∂a

Óss is the way of most journeys,
but a scabbard is of swords.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

Oss er aldingautr
ok Asgar∂s jofurr,
ok Valhallar visi.
Jupiter oddviti.

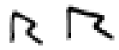
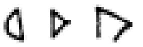
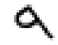
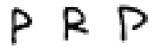
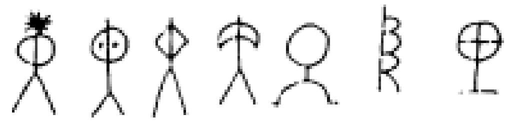
Oss – aged gautr (god)
and prince of Asgard
and lord of Valhalla.



Rad is a very complex rune. Basically it refers to riding, to journeys and quests. We find this in such words as OE *rad* (street, path, road) OE *ridan* (to ride) OHG *rado* (swift) *girado* (suddenly), OICE *reið‑* (wagon) *reidatyr* (god of the wagons) *reiða* (equipment, motion), all of which go back to **ret(h)-*, roll, run. ᚱ is not just a journey - people rarely travelled for fun - but a quest, a knight (German = *Ritter*) errand. The quest is an old tradition, both for knights (who got most of their education this way) and for shamans (journeys to the underworld, healing journeys etc.) The quest involves challenge, ordeal and triumph: the rider returns transformed. The task is of less importance than the going, and in the going each step on the road is the sum of all the way. Such journeys are 'rites of passage' that allow transformation and re-definition in an alien environment.

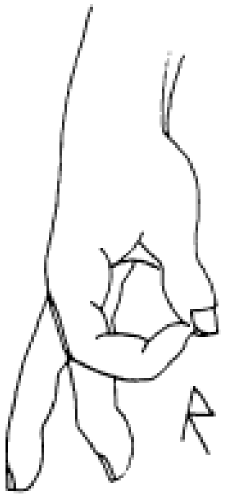
In a sense, ᚱ refers to the wheel - the journey is a circle - and to this day the G *Rad* = wheel. In the Celtic, the cycle of the year is divided into four *radh*, each of which is a season (*earrach* from *ear* = head - spring, *samhradh* from *samh* = sun - summer, *fogharadh* from *fogh* = fullness - fall and *geamradh* from *geimheal* = chain - winter). As a parallel of the great yearly cycle, the council-circle assembles; the experience gained on the road is the quality that allows participation. The council-circle is the ᚱ rune as OICE *rað* (council, plan, advise, intent) *rada* (to give advise) OHG *rat*, *raht* (council, decision), OE *raed* (help, advise) *raedan* (to govern, rule). German *raten* = to guess, a *Rätsel* is a riddle.

The concept of the ruling *rath* goes back to the IE root **ar-*, **are-* and **re-*, which equals 'to put together'. We find this root in the Jera rune, in the ᚱ context it led to such terms as 'harmony', 'art', 'order' and 'rite'.

OHG = Raido = ᚱ 
OE = rad ᚱ
ON = rat, raiðu, ræið, reið ᚱ
GO = reida, reda ᚱ
ET = 
PH = 
GR = 
NA = 

The Old English Rune Poem
Rad byth on recyde
rinca gehwylcum
sefte ond swithwæt
∂em∂e sitteth on ufan
meare mægenheardum
ofer milpathas.

Rad seems very easy to every warrior
while he is indoors
and very courageous to him
who traverses the highroads
on the back of a stout horse.

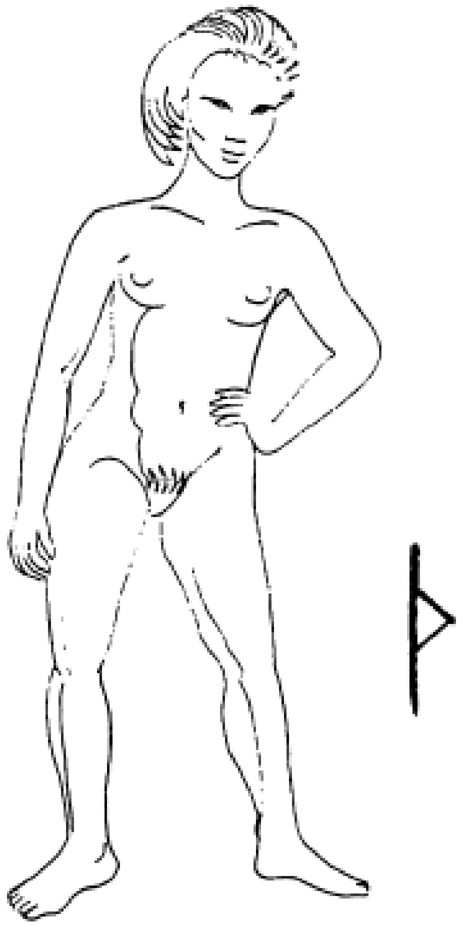


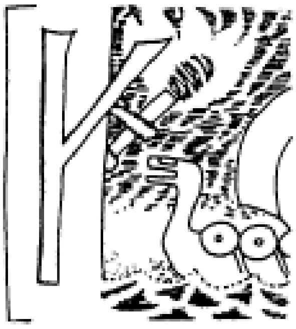
The Old Norse Rune Poem
Ræi∂ kve∂a rossom væsta
Reginn sló svæðet bæzta.

Ræi∂ is said to be the worst thing
for horses
Reginn forged the finest sword.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
Rei∂ er sitjandi sæla
ok snu∂ig fer∂
ok jors erfi∂i
iter ræsir.

Rei∂ = joy of the horseman
and speedy journey
and toil of the steed
iter = journey.



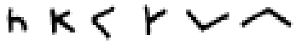
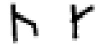
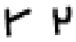
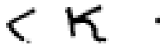
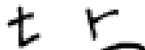
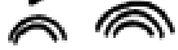
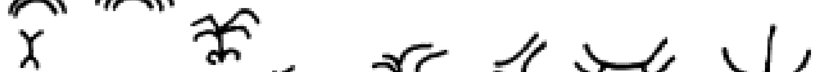
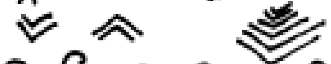
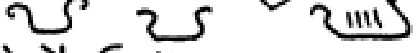
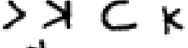


Ken is a very enigmatic rune. Its symbolism has much to do with fire, not the ancient fire (ᚠ) nor the solar flame (ᛋ) but the human expression of it. OHG *chien* and OE *cen* both mean a bit of wood which was cut from a tree and used as a torch. To this day a *kienspan* is a bit of pinewood used to light fires, and *kienäpfel* are the 'apples' of the pine. *Kynda*, OICE, is 'to kindle' a flame.

The torch is made by splitting (OE *cinan*) wood, the ᚲ K ᚴ itself shows a split/cleft (OE *cinu*). In the St Gallen rune manuscript we are told that ᚲ is equally 'split off' and 'glued to', the text is ambiguous and the symbol could be understood in both ways. ᚴ could be a wall with a torch, ᚲ is clearly a cleft. It is interesting to note that the ulcer referred to in the poems burns just like a torch. The IE root **kenk-* (to burn) is the source of the modern 'hunger': the flame has to devour.

The poems also refer to disease and death. In some futhorc rows, such as the St Gallen versions, the ᚲ stands at the end of the first row and outside of the regular order. Indirectly we are reminded of the G *Kahn* (small boat), ON *kan* (boat, cup) and OICE *gin, kin*, (prow of a ship, open jaws, as in *ginnungagap* = gaping jaws, the gap of voidness that surrounds the world.) The boat or ship was often used for funerals. Sometimes a hill was erected over the ship and sometimes the boat was set on fire on the water, see for example the account of Balder's funeral in the *Edda*.

Some authors emphasize the presence of the *aethlingas* (nobility) in the poem, and connect ᚲ with the idea of kinship, from OE *cyn* = people, tribe, species. The heads of the clan are OICE *konung* (king, noble) and the queen, *kona*. Obviously such people are prime candidates for the development of stomach ulcers. Others claim that ᚲ comes from ON *kuna*, which is a 'young maiden'. If we view ᚲ as a cleft, this symbolism might work out, but if we consider the equally valid ᚴ the phallic symbolism cannot be denied. Both of them are fiery.

OHG = kaunaz, kenaz, kano, kien 
OE = cen, ken 
ON = kaun, kauna, chaon 
GO = kusma, chozma 
P = 
NG = 
NS = 
NSC = 
MB = 
ET = 
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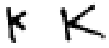
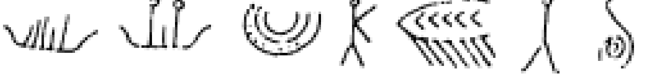
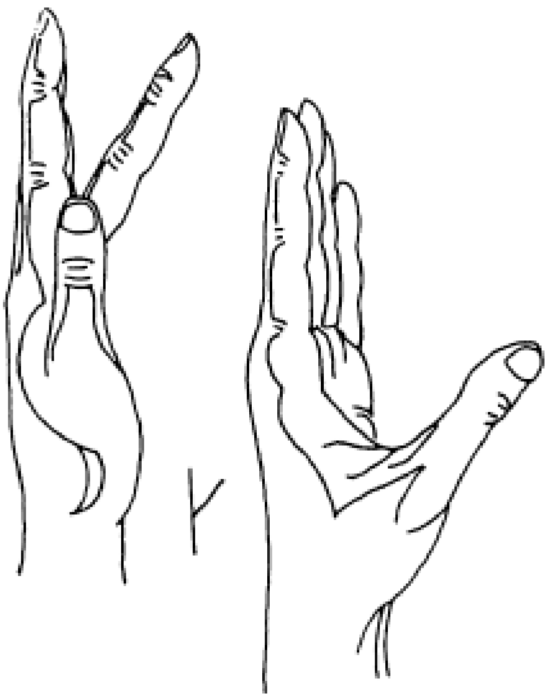
GR = 
NA = 

The Old English Rune Poem

Cen byth ewicera gehwam
cuth on fyre
blac ond beorhtlic
byrneth oftust
∂ær hi æthelingas
inne restath

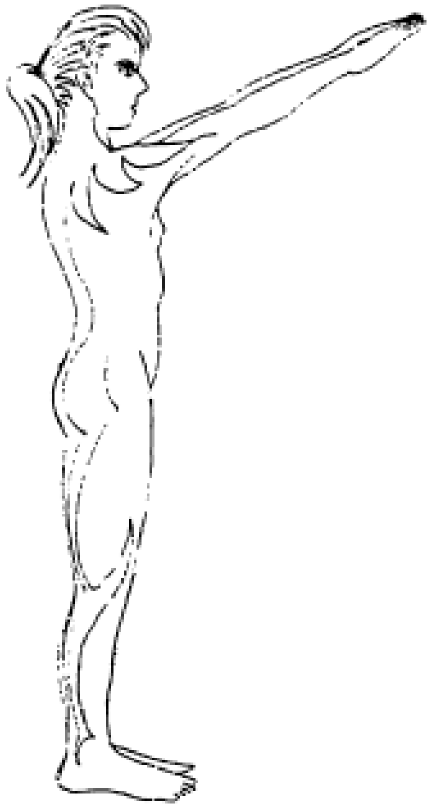
Cen is known to every living man
by its pale, bright flame,
it always burns
where princes sit within.



The Old Norse Rune Poem

Kaun er barna bolvan
bol gorver nân folvan.

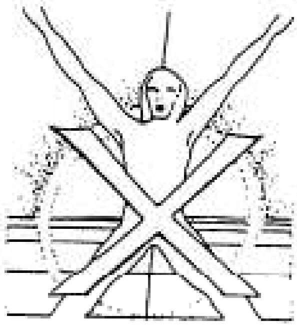
Kaun is fatal to children
death makes a corpse pale.

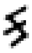
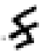
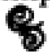


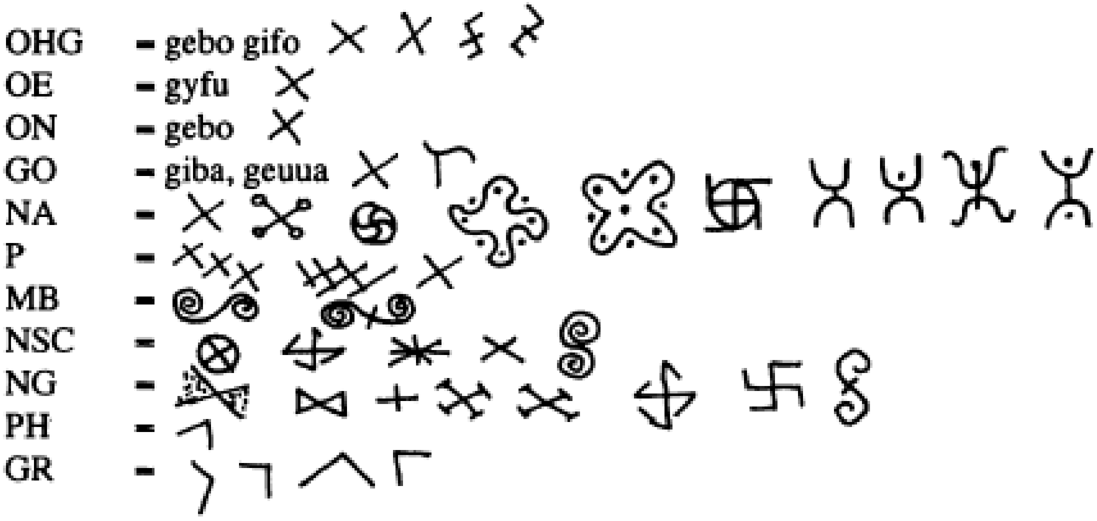
The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

Kaun er barna böl
ok bardaga (för)
ok holdfua hus
flagella konungr

Kaun – fatal to children
and painful spot
and abode of mortification
Flagella – ulcer.



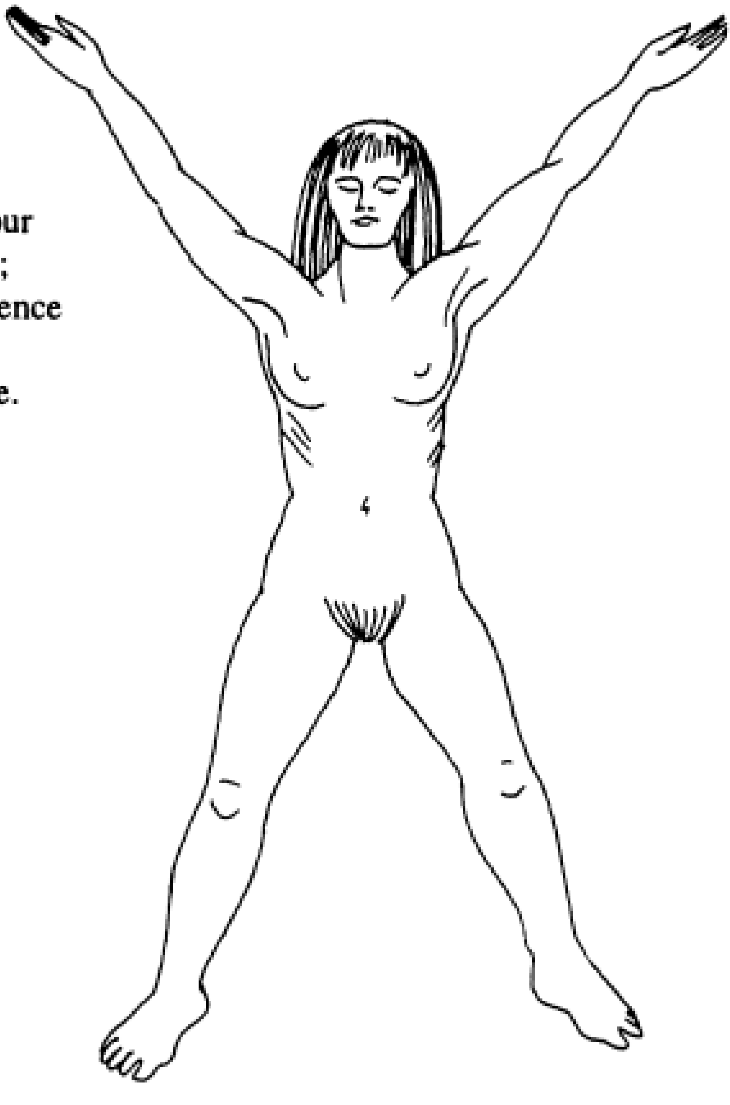
Gyfu is the seventh of the Old English poem, it does not occur in the Scandinavian systems. *Gyfu* means giving, (OHG *geban*, GOT *giban*, OE *giefan*, ON *gifa*) which evolved out of the IE **ghab-* to grab, take, carry, give and **gheb-* to give, to take. Curiously both aspects - giving and taking - occur simultaneously in the Indo-European. The word 'gift' (G. *Gabe*) comes from this. The gift is a sacrifice, a giving to all and a receiving in kind. The rune posture, often used to release excess power, symbolizes a person who spreads and opens up. The original act of giving is the giving of oneself, it is the only thing one can be free to give. Possibly the OHG *gebed, gibet*, OE *gebed*, prayer, has to do with X. The X is also a gable, from **ghabholo-*, fork, branch of a tree. The Old Germanic type of houses had a gable, with beast heads finials, usually dragons or horses. A variation is  which seems to be a simplified swastika, fire wheel. The sign  also resembles the popular peasant sign  which is called the 'wolf-hook', the crossbar being the item that breaks the wolf's power.

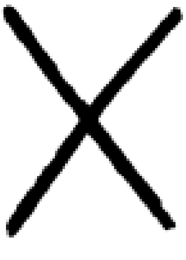


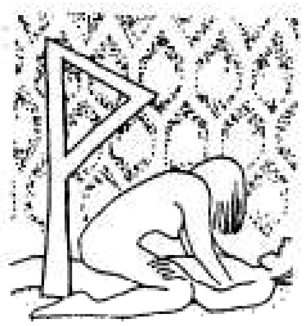
The Old English Rune Poem

Gyfu gumena byth
gleng and herenys
wrathu and wyrthscype
and wræcna gehwam
ar and ætwist
∂e byth othra leas

Gyfu brings credit and honour
which support one's dignity;
it furnishes help and subsistence
to all broken men
who are devoid of aught else.







Wyn is rune number eight in the OE poem, unknown in the Scandinavian texts. Wyn is a rune of joy and bliss. The IE **wen-* (to desire, strive for) can be found in OHG *wunno* joy, luck, bliss, lust, *wini* beloved, *weniz* hope, OICE *vingjof* joy-gift, OE *wine* – friend, protector. the German *Wonne* (bliss), the English 'to win' 'winsome' and the Latin 'Venus' come from this root, probably also the tribal name *vanir* and the *vanadis*, Freya, goddess of love.

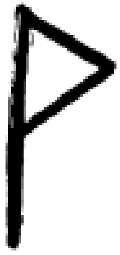
The sign ᚹ is something of a riddle. If we lay it down it suggests a posture that was frequently used by Wilhelm Reich and his followers to release the 'orgasm reflex' (see chapter 16). The bent posture of the legs frees the hip/belly region to move, tremble, vibrate, which in turn dissolves the sexual armour (stiffness).

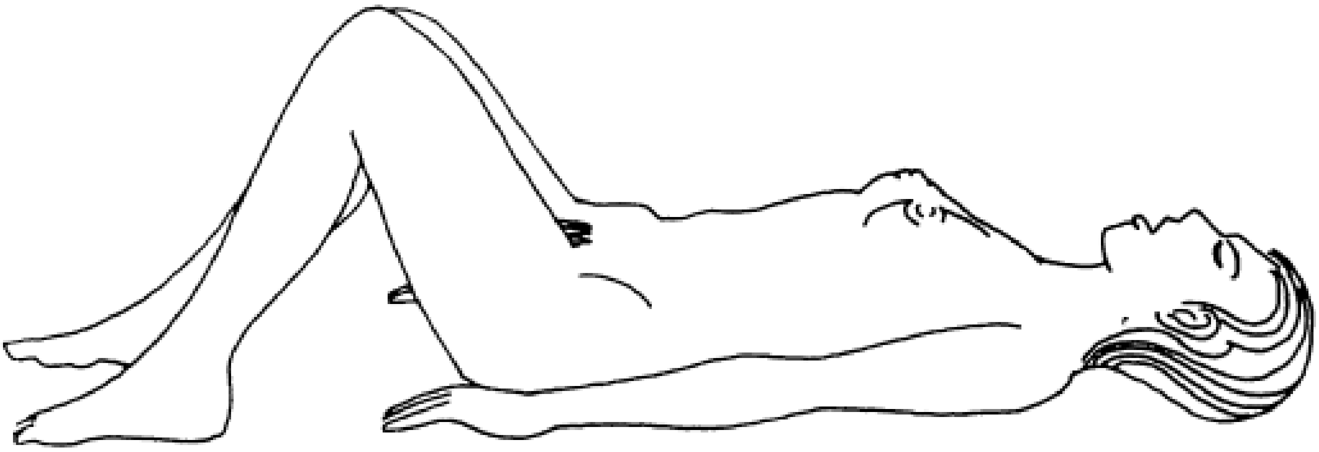
In another sense we can see as a pair making love, he as earth (__) and she bending over him (^), our lady Babalon and the Beast on which she rides. For some obscure reason this lucid symbolism has escaped the awareness of historical scholars, who tend to find their bliss among books and not in bed.

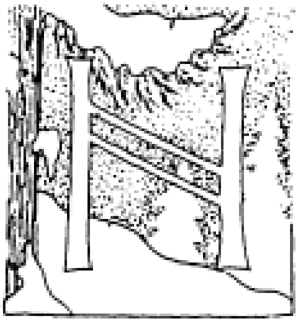
OHG – wyn, wynne, wunna, wunno ᚹ P
OE – wyn, wenne ᚹ
GO – winja, uuinne ᚹ ᛦ
PH – ᛦ
NA – ᚹ ᚹ ᚹ ᛄ

The Old Norse Rune Poem
Wenne bruceth
ðe can weana lyt
sares and sorge
and him sylfa hæfth
blæd and blysse
and eac byrga geniht.

Wenne he enjoys who knows
no suffering, sorrow nor anxiety,
and has prosperity and happiness
and a good enough house.

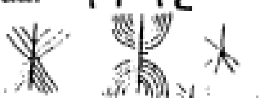
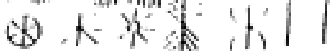






Hagal is the beginning of the second Aettir. Some attribute the rune to Wodan in his aspects of Har (high) or Höttr (the one with the hat). ᚺ is a rune of wintertime when the human and natural world went to sleep under a carpet of snow. Winter was the season of sleep, darkness, restoration, patience and rebirth. Outdoor activity and warfare had to be abandoned, the family stayed together at home, the 'whiteness from heaven' making travel and work largely impossible. *Hagal* is sometimes interpreted as 'hag-all', hag, root of the word 'hedge', from IE **kagh-* to catch, seize, wickerwork, fence. 'Ich hege das All' ('I am custodian of all') is a common and modern German interpretation of the rune. It is the protective blanket of snow that refreshes earth, healing the natural world. ᚺ is often called a healing rune, but the healing suggested by winter is not a gentle affair. The cold cleans. The seed sleeps in suspension. The weak beings find death, the strong ones fresh strength. People retire indoors, where they have a long and dark season to come to terms with themselves. Such isolation could strengthen the family ties or break them entirely. Whether the enforced inactivity is a blessing or a curse depends on how we get along with ourselves. Wintertime was seen as preparation for the year to come. The old people would recount legends and tales - while the younger generation spun flax, worked on the loom or carved household goods. Nordic sagas mention up to three great winter feasts, each of which could last for days or weeks, depending on the wealth of the host.

The snow crystal is suggested by the ᚼ shape, and to my imagination ᚺ is a snow drift between two trees. Hagal is also rooted in the IE **kaghlo-* pebble, hail. ᚼ is called a *Binderune*, as the rune posture can only be done in stages (such as ᛦ ᛉ or ᛅ ᛆ = ᚼ) or by a pair standing close together. When working on your own, try ᛉ posture, vibrate 'hag', let the arms down into ᛦ, vibrate 'al'. There is a brief pause as the arms move, nevertheless the full word is done in one breath. The same procedure is used for ᛅ 'hag', ᛆ 'al'. The essential idea is to establish a six-rayed star. When working with your love, stand close together and imagine you two are a single shape. One partner does ↑ while the other is in ᛉ. Then both vibrate 'hag', switch postures, and complete with 'al'. The rune contains motion and is good for dancing also.

OHG = hagalaz ᚺ ᚺ ᚺ ǂ ᚻ ᚼ
OE = haegl ᚻ ᚺ
ON = hagall, hagal, hagla ᚼ ✱
GO = hagl, haal ᚺ 𐌷
P = ✱

NG =
NSC =

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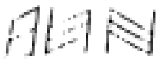
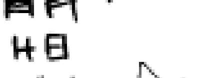
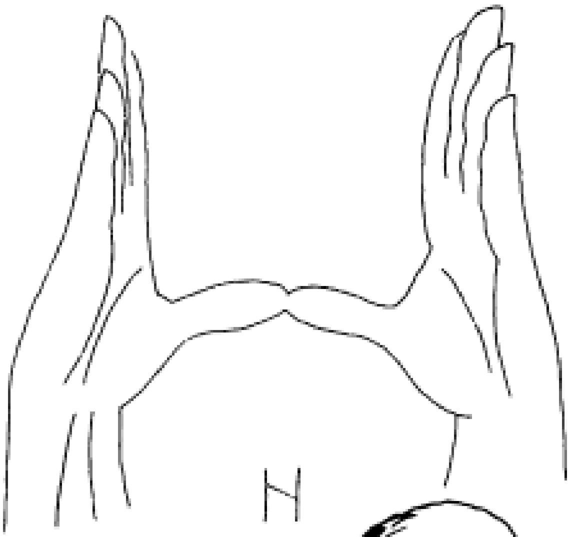

PH = 𐤇 𐤇
GR = Ͱ ⊟
NA =


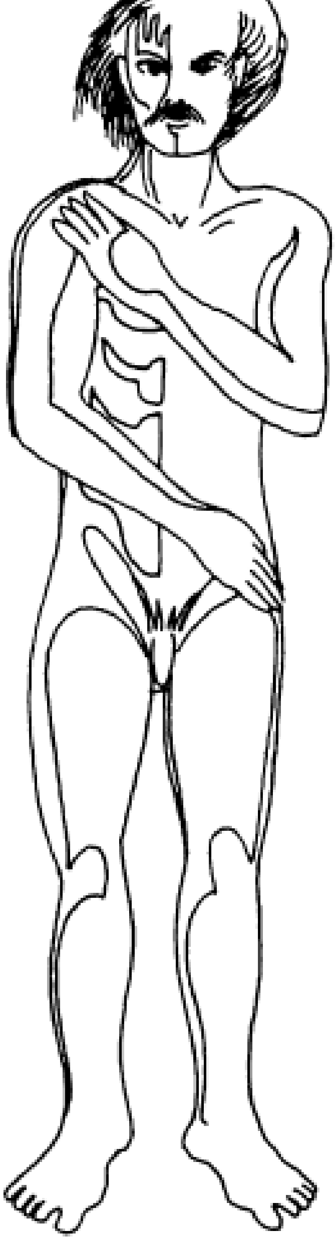
The Old English Rune Poem
Hægl byth hwitust corna
hwyrft hit of heofones lyfte
wealcath hit windes scura
weortheth hit to wætere
syððan.

Haegl is the whitest of grain
it is whirled from the vault of heaven
and is tossed about by gusts of wind
and then it melts into water.



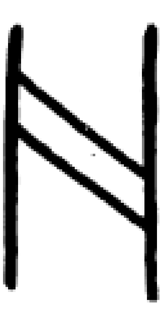
The Old Norse Rune Poem
Hagall er kaldastr korna
kristr skop hæimenn forna.

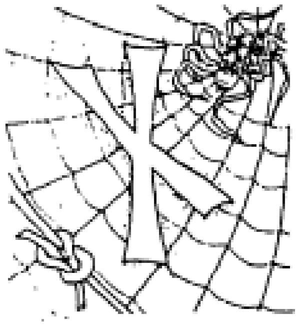
Hagall is the coldest of grain
Christ created the world of old.



The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
Hagall er kaldakorn
ok krapadrifa
ok snaka sott
grando is hildingr

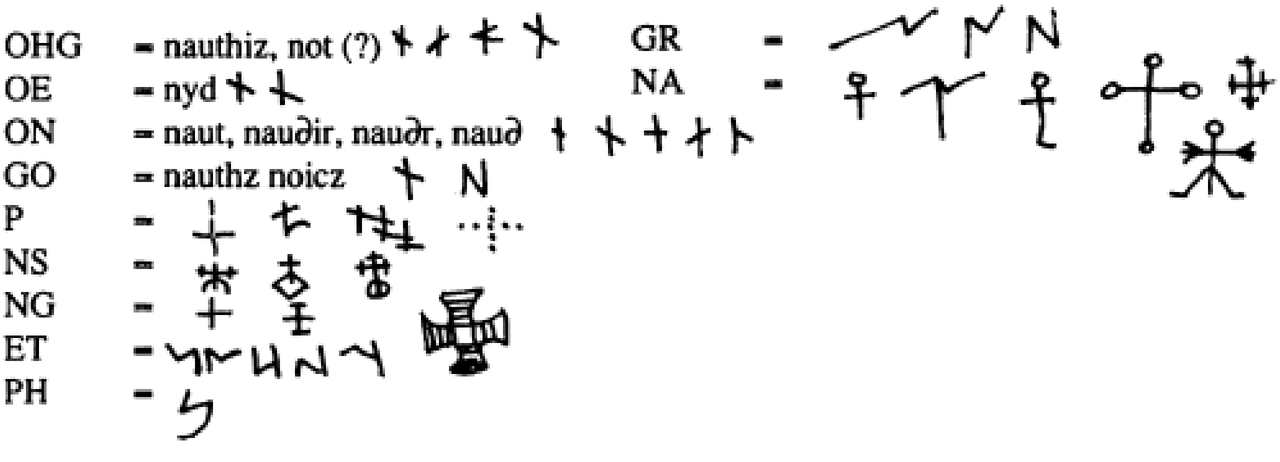
Hagall is cold grain
and shower of sleet
and sickness of serpents.
Grando = hail.





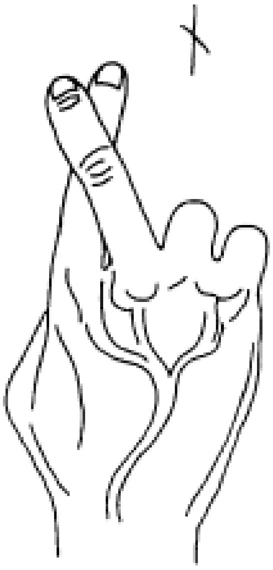
Nyd is a rune that has suffered too much negative publicity. OHG *niot, not*, GO *nauths*, OE *nyd*, OICE *nauðr* all mean 'need, necessity, pressure, compulsion' and similar ideas. This 'need' is not quite as simple as it seems. The OICE *nauðsyn* is 'need-sin' while *njotta* = 'to enjoy'. OHG *niot, niet, nit* are 'desire, longing, to lust for', while *nietegi* is the dreaded 'lust of the flesh' OE *neod* is 'desire, craving' and *nyt* is 'urge, duty' and could even refer to an office. In all of these cases there is necessity, but not in the 'hunger and lack' ideology favoured by some scholars. Without the least historical verification, the eighteen rune system goes so far to introduce the modern 'eh' rune, which looks like ᛅ to oppose the doom and darkness atmosphere of ᚾ with the positive concepts of marriage (*Ehe* in German). Now the ᚾ rune in its original sense could suggest imbalance, a posture in a dance of disturbed equilibrium. Another interpretation of the sign leads to the knot, the knitting and the net, from IE **kn*- to press, contract, push, knead, bind. ᚾ is a rune of binding and dissolving, coming together and coming apart. The knot is a place/event. Here is the net worked by the Norns (Nyrnir = weavers), the spider web of all reality. All events are seen as the interaction of lines of force, combining to create the web of destiny. Where two persons, events, ideas meet, their lifelines show mutual change; they 'share a gesture' (Castaneda) and proceed to develop from the shared knot of their interaction. All rituals or moments of intense event/experience are knots in the fabric of the net. ᚾ refers to ties, known and unknown, the ties of hunger and fulfillment, the spells we work in need and the bondage we form in joy and laughter with our beloved ones. Knot magick has its place here. When we seize the instant and tie or open our knot in fullness of consciousness, the lines of interaction change the pattern of the whole. The knot is imbued with its vision and communicated into the web of all life.

It should be noted that Nauthiz is sometimes drawn ᚾ and sometimes ᛅ. There is no need to introduce that modern version of 'eh' when the 'not' idea itself includes the idea of bond-fasting, be it out of necessity or out of free will. Another interesting interpretation suggests that ᚾ is a fire drill (a drill pus a bow) which was used for the 'need fires', which are described in Frazer's *Golden Bough*.


OHG = nauthiz, not (?)
OE = nyd
ON = naut, nauðir, nauðr, nauð
GO = nauthz noicz
P =
NS =
NG =
ET =
PH =
GR =
NA =

The Old English Rune Poem
Nyd byth nearu on breostan
weortheth hi theah oft
nitha bearnum
to helpe and to hæle gehwæthre
gif hi his hlystath æror.

Nyd is oppressive to the heart
yet often it proves a source of help
and salvation to the children of men,
to everyone who heeds it betimes.

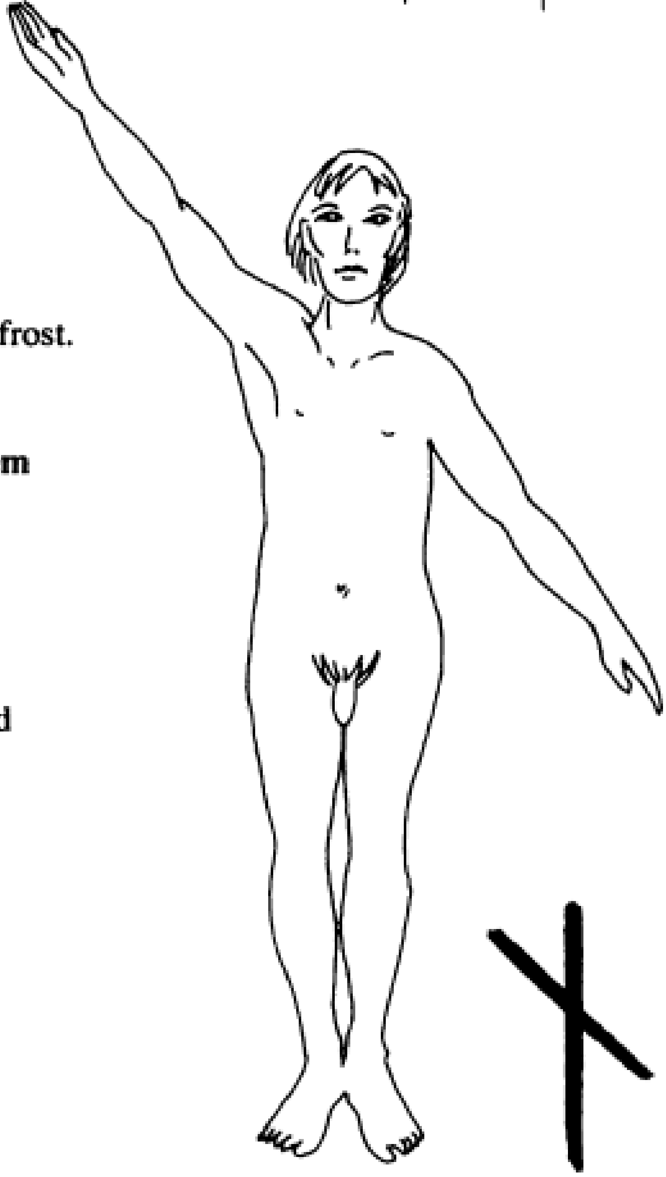


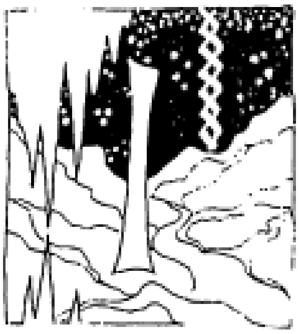
The Old Norse Rune Poem
Nauðr gerer næppa koste;
noktan kælri froste

Nauðr gives scant choice
a naked man is chilled by the frost.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
Nauð er thyjar thra
ok thungr kostr
ok vassamlig verk.
Opera niflungr

Nauð is grief of the bond-maid
and state of oppression
and toilsome work
opera = work.





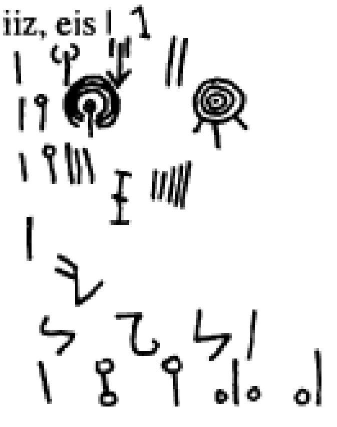
Isa rune is the only one that was never varied, no matter which futhorc version was used. The sign remained as it is, and this 'freezing of development' is one of its essential meanings. OE *is*, OHG *is*, OICE *iss*, all go back to the IE root **eis*- which is 'ice, frost'. In the *Edda* we find some very clear references to the ice-ages, to the creation of life out of fire and ice and to the giants of the ice, the Hrim Thursir. Ice is frozen water, signifying that the fluid becomes solid (for a time), thereby suspending development and change.

Ice is cold, beautiful and dangerous. The crust of ice covers lakes and streams, even the shores of the ocean, and life has to continue in the darkness underneath, unseen. The ice-bridge may connect the shores but we have to walk with great caution and very slowly. Some sorts of ice are criss-crossed with myriads of angular lines, which provide an excellent field for rune divination. Then there is the image of the mountain goddess Skadi who bound the sickles of the moon to her feet and invented skating.

The ᛁ posture has a strangely sobering effect. It 'freezes' the rolling astral tides and reduces the mage to the simplest possible form. A single line to bind heaven and earth. Tradition frequently links the ᛁ rune with the 'I-phenomena', and certainly all notions of identity are just frozen images that suspend what is otherwise fluid and in motion.

ᛁ is also connected with OHG *isarn* = holy metal = iron. The first iron, the 'holy metal', fell from the skies. Several Icelandic Kenningar[1] use ice as a symbol for iron, such as the 'Valkyrie's ice' (the sword) or the 'arm-ice' (bracelets of iron or silver). OICE *isarn* and OHG *isin, isenin, isinin* = iron, often a symbol for any sort of weapon. Weapons also have to do with the 'I-phenomena', but there is little need to emphasize that point.

OHG = is isa ᛁ
OE = is, isar ᛁ
ON = iss, is, isar ᛁ
GO = iiz, eis ᛁ
P =
NS =
NG =
NSC =
ET =
PH =
GR =
NA =



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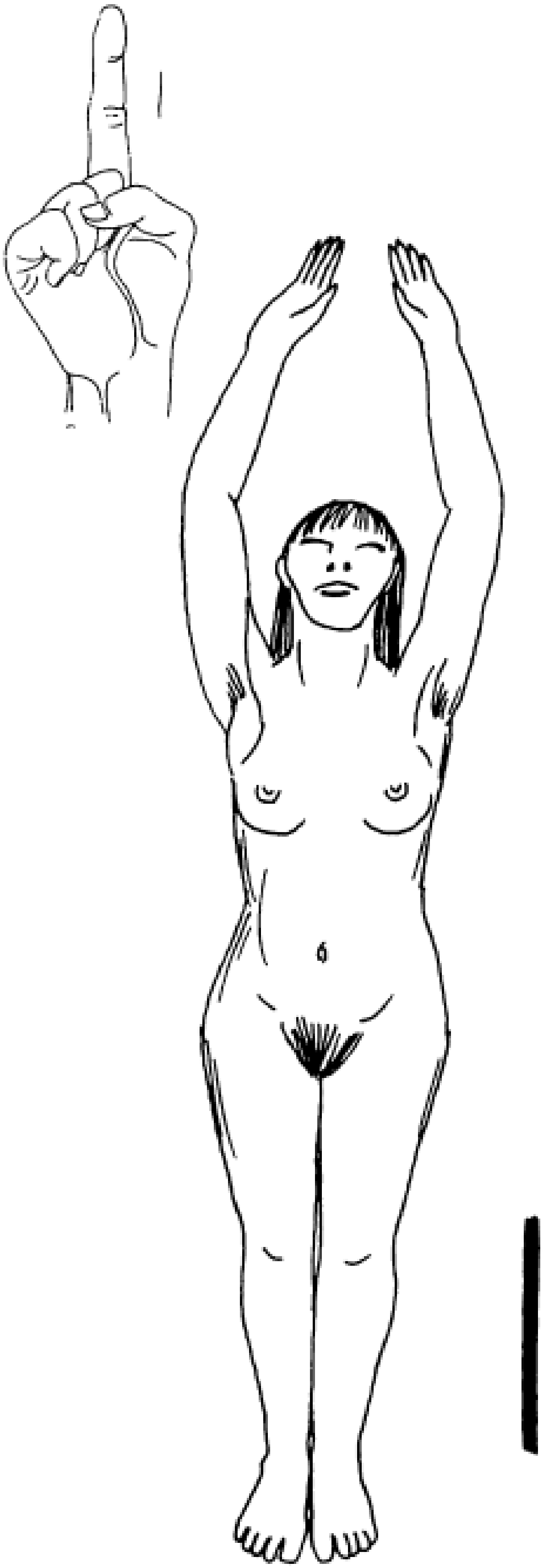
[1] Poetic metaphors, very popular amongst the Nordic Skalds.



The Old English Rune Poem
Is byth oferceald
ungemetum slidor
glisnath glæshluttur
gimmum gelicust
flor forste geworuht
fæger ansyne

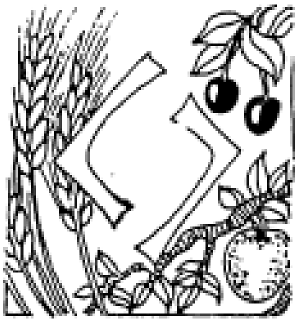
Is is very cold and immeasurably
slippery
it glistens as clear as glass
and most like to gems;
it is a floor wrought by the frost,
fair to look upon.

The Old Norse Rune Poem
Is kollum bru bræi∂a
blindan tharf at læi∂a.

Is we call the broad bridge;
the blind man must be led.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
Iss er arbökr
ok unnar thak
ok feigra manna far
glacies jöfurr

Iss is bark of river
and roof of the wave
and destruction of the doomed
glacies is ice.



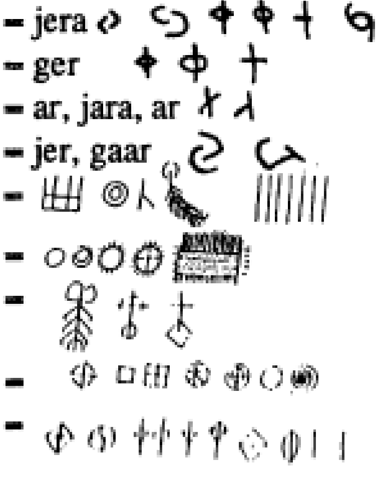
Ger is a rune that deals with agriculture. Consider the 'Neolithic revolution', the change in lifestyle and philosophy that came when nomads decided to settle, possibly for generations. The age of the hunter/gatherer gave way to the age of the peasant.

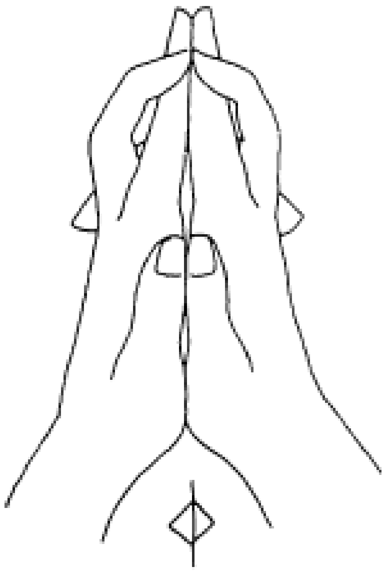
The Indo-European roots **ger*- to gather, **gher*- to grasp, enclose, and **ar*-, to fit together, produced a wide field of new words. OICE *jarda* (buried) *jarðriki* (realm of earth) *gardr* (settlement, garden). OHG *gard, gardo* (garden, circle, choir). OE *geard* (enclosed space, country, garden.) We are reminded of Asgard (Aesir land) Midgard (middle land) and Utgard (outland). Perhaps ᛃ shows the enclosure of a field. To the peasant, land itself was survival. The hunter-gatherer relies on luck, skill and mobility, to the peasant endurance, law and long-term planning are vital. The soil is divided, worked, defended and passed on to heirs, which requires a new definition of law, order and property. Earth produces fruit. The ᛃ or ᛄ can be seen as an image of the seed or of the grain that grows out of it.

Time now enters the picture. Seeds grow into plants according to season: OHG *garo* and OE *gearn*, from the IE **garwa-z*, all mean 'complete, ripe, ready'. The season of fulfilment, autumn, is called *Herbst* in German, which is related to 'harvest'. The very concept of the year (OHG *jar*, OE *gear*, ON *ar*) has to do with the harvest time, which is ON *arnot*. *Airem* is a Celtic name for the ploughman. In the Old English land blessing the spirit of the earth is called *erce*, closely related to the Earth-Goddess Gerda, wife of the fertility god Freyr, and Jörd/Fjörgyn (earth) the earliest wife of Odin in the *Edda*.

Sometimes the rune is simplified into ᛅ or ᛆ. It is called *ar* and attributed to the Sun-God, to the Aryan people (the Indo-Europeans) and to a questionable deity called Ara Hari, a solar god-man discovered by Nazi historians on the basis of sheer idealism. That the Indo-Europeans were an agricultural society already deep into solar worship and patriarchal government is attested by many scholars. This is called the 'aeon of Osiris' is occult circles, Osiris/Asar being basically a corn and grain god who is killed in the harvest, then the fields are burned (Set) and his separate parts (the seeds) are scattered. Out of the barren earth the fresh life is reborn. Like all solar heroes, death and resurrection form the central part of his myth, the fruit is also the sacrifice.

OHG – jera
OE – ger
ON – ar, jara, ar
GO – jer, gaar
P –
NG –
NS –
NSC –
NA –

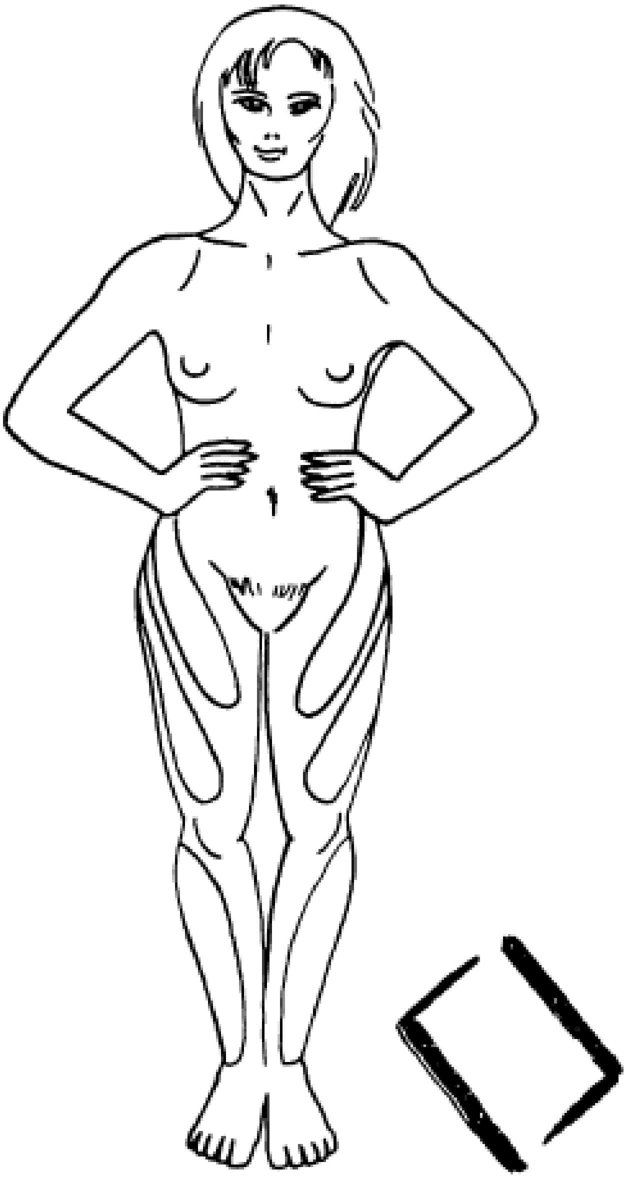




The Old English Rune Poem

Ger byth gumena hiht
∂onne god læteth
halig heofones cyning
hrusan syllan
beorhte bleda
beornum ond ∂earfum.

Ger is a joy to men, when God, the
holy king of heaven,
suffers the earth to bring forth
shining fruits for rich and poor alike.



The Old Norse Rune Poem

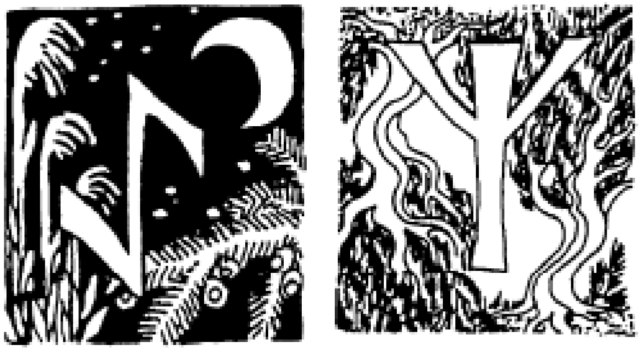
Ar er gumna gó∂e
get ek at orr var Fró∂e

Ar is a boon to men
I say that Frothi was generous.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

Ar er gumna Gó∂i
ok gott sumar
ok algróinn akr
annus allvaldr

Ar is a boon to men
and good summer
and thriving crops
annus is year.



Ehwaz, Eohl, Yr belong to a group. There has been a mix-up of meanings, leading to a degree of confusion. The OE ᛉ meaning the sedge grass, appears in the ON rune systems in reverse (also in the St. Gallen version) ᛦ and refers to the yew tree. Simultaneously the ᛉ is explained as the 'man' rune (originally ᛗ) in the Scandinavian systems. To increase complications, the OE rune poem introduces another rune for the yew tree, it is the common ᛇ, the 'é' of the common Germanic futhorc. This is not absolutely certain, the sound was probably like the 'ä' in modern German. Another theory claims the proper sound was 'dg' or even 'Sh' - the important thing is that it is not the normal 'e' sound.

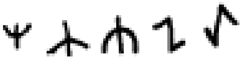
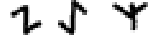
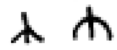
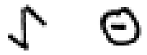
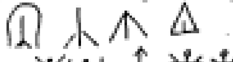
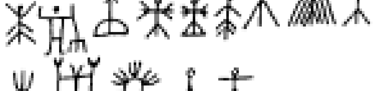
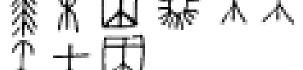
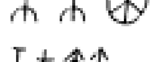
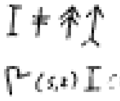
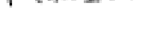
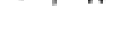
Thus we get: OE ᛉ = sedge, ᛇ = yew, ᛗ = man. ON ᛦ = yew, ᛉ = man (this version can also be found in the St Gallen texts, which predate the Scandinavian systems.) The sedge is missing in Old Norse. I think that it is rather futile to speculate about the 'true' meaning of these runes. For working purposes it is enough to travel into the rune tunnels: here you will find out which sign is a yew and which belongs to the swamp.

The yew is one of the trees that lives for centuries. Its hard, compact wood made it excellent for the purpose of hunting from Neanderthal times to the middle ages; bows and crossbows were made out of yew wood until the tree had almost died out. In the elder days a special arrow poison was distilled out of yew berries, needles and wood, the bright pink berry flesh being the only part of the tree that contains comparatively little poison. Our word for poison, toxin, comes from the yew's name *taxus*. The yew is a death tree. It produces its bright berries in fall when many other trees shed their leaves, and retains its fresh green needle coat all the year through.

Few yews can be found in the forests nowadays, the tree grows too slowly to be of economic use. Many of them can be found growing happily in cemeteries all over Northern Europe, there being a proverb that the cemetery yew has a root within each coffin. Scholars claim that once a yew cult had its sacred groves in northern Europe where the (Scandinavian) god Ullr was invoked. There is a curious connection between the ONᛦ and the concept of madness. The OHG *irri, irre, irr* = confused, lost, free of, heretic, unsteady, crazy (root of the G *irr* = insane, mad, crazy) and the OE *ierre, yrre* = excited, angry, confused, wild, from the IE root: **ers-* to be in motion. These words aptly describe madness, rage and intoxication - possibly side results of handling the poison. Perhaps the change from ᛉ to ᛦ symbolizes the roots, the reversal of reality, the impossible dream of a tree that is green in winter and feeds birds in spite of its extreme poison. Well, the birds enjoy the bright (yew from OHG: *iwa*, OE:*iw*, OICE: *yr* = bright, reddish, colourful) flesh of the berries and spread the seeds without digesting them. Hironymus Bock in his book *Herbal Lore* (1577) claims that yews are so toxic that it is certain death to sleep among them. The toxin is said to be strongest in mid winter. Another popular use for yew wood was to carve amulets or rune staffs. yew wood was said to drive away evil spirits. The mysteries of the yew are the trances of death, madness, confusion and that exalted state of inspired craziness that reverses the order of the world and goes beyond reason. Here is the realm of the jester and the clown.

The sedge-symbol also reverses the order of the world. In the swampland, firm earth is untrustworthy, the ground is treacherous, there is nothing solid or certain. The swamp breeds curious amphibious creatures that live in both realms. The elk or moose gave its name to the rune sign (elk = OHG *elho*, OE = *eohl*, ON = *alg*), as the moose is a variety of giant deer that thrives in swamp and marsh country. Its broad hooves allow the beast free passage where a person would sink. Swampland was often used as a place of refuge in times of war. Many swamps had secret pathways - wooden planks on stilts hidden beneath the water. Remnants of one such pathway can be seen in the British Museum. Countless swamp sanctuaries are being discovered nowadays, often rich in sacrificial gifts, weapons, ornaments, model wagons and corpses. The swamp is a magical realm where the world is hostile, fluid, uncertain though very beautiful. Now the elk sedge is a sort of reed plant that rises out of the water and sways gently in the breeze. Its name possibly goes back to **elkos-* wound, sore, ulcer and **sek-* to cut, root of the words 'sickle, sedge, saw, sax (sword)'. The leaves of sedge grass are sharp, who grabs them carelessly gets cut.

What follows now is sheer speculation. I tend to perceive ᛇ as a counterpart of ᛋ, a lunar opposite to the solar ᛋ. This line involves both runes as aspects of each other. Where ᛋ is 'straight - broken - straight', (☲) ᛇ is 'broken - straight - broken'. (☵) The ᛇ in my vision, is the double sickle of the moon, which would nicely blend with the swamp/water/marsh/sedge character.

OHG =ᛇ ehwaz, eiwaz, ᛦ yr, ybe, iwa 
OE =ᛇ eoh;.ᛉ eȯhl 
ON =ᛦyr, algir, yr 
GO = alga, ezec, egeis, eyz 
P = 
NA = 
NSC = 
NS = 
ET = 
PH = 
GR = 

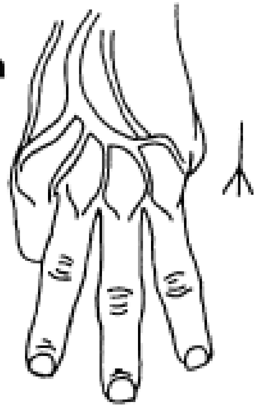
Eiwaz continued:

The Old English Rune Poem

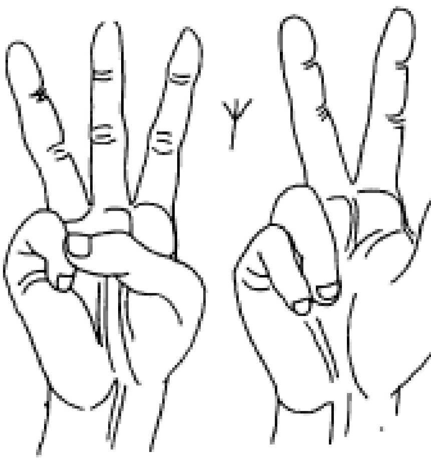
ᛇ Eoh byth utan
unsmethe treow
heard hrusan fæst
hyrde fyres
wyrtrumun underwrethyd
Wyn on ethle.

Eoh is a tree with rough bark,
hard and fast in the earth,
supported by its roots,
a guardian of flame
and a joy upon an estate.

ᛉ Eohl - secg eard hæfth
oftust on fenne
wexe∂ on wature
wunda∂ grimme
blode brene∂
beorna gehwylcne
∂e him ænigne
onfeng gedeth



Eohl - sedge is mostly to be found
in a marsh, it grows in the water
and makes a ghastly wound
covering with blood
every warrior who touches it.



The Old Norse Rune Poem

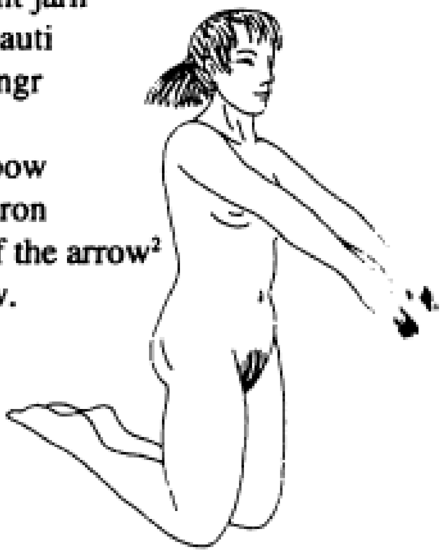
ᛦ Yr er vetrgrønstr vi∂a;
vænt er, er brennr, at svi∂a.

Yr is the greenest of trees in winter,
it is wont to crackle when it burns.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

ᛦ Yr er bendr bogi
ok brotgjarnt jarn
ok fifu farbauti
arcus ynglingr

Yr is bent bow
and brittle iron
and giant of the arrow[2]
arcus = bow.



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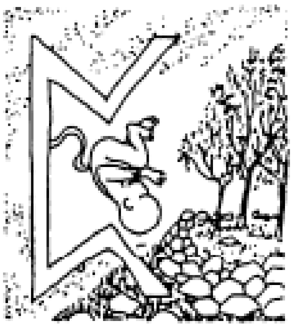
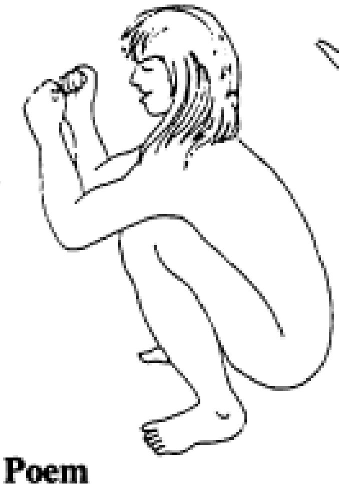
[2] B Dickins translates *Farbauti* as 'Giant of the arrow', who appears in the *Edda* as the father of Loki. The name seems to be ambiguous and several scholars have translated it as 'Fast to escape'.

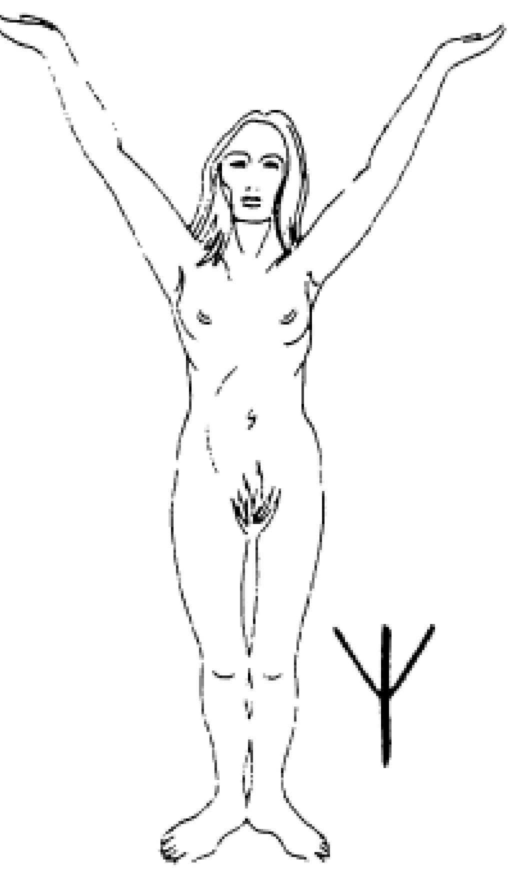


Peord is rune no 14 in the OE rune poem, placed between ᛇ and ᛉ. The text is obscure and defies clear interpretation. ᛈ seems to suggest an entrance into a room/space, possibly a cave. OHG *P(h)orta, borta* = gate, door, *p(h)orzih* = hall, hallway. Another possible root refers to the hill fortress, OHG *bergaz*, OE *beorg* (burg, borough), from IE **bergh-* to hide, protect, **bherg-*, high, hill fortress. German *Berg* = mountain. The earliest Bergs are ring-wall sanctuaries that were fortified in wartime.

The ᛈ is a squatting posture. It can be found in some swamp corpses; the sacrifice was bound into a ᛈ shape, like an embryo, before being strangled and sunk. This might link the ᛈ idea with the hall (uterus) and warrior (foetus). The posture could be of use in giving birth.

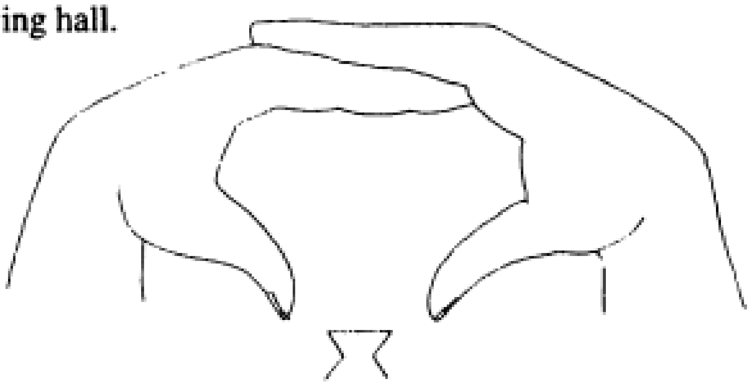
OHG – peord ᛈ ⋈
OE – peord, peorð ᛈ ᚳ
GO – pairtha petra ᛈ 𐍀
ET – 𐌐 𐌐
PH – 𐤐
GR – Γ Γ Π Π

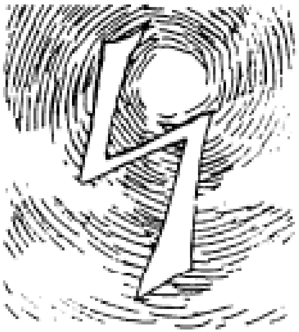




The Old English Rune Poem
Peorð byth symble
plega and hlehter
wlancum (on middum)
ðar wigan sittath
on beorsele
blithe ætsomne.

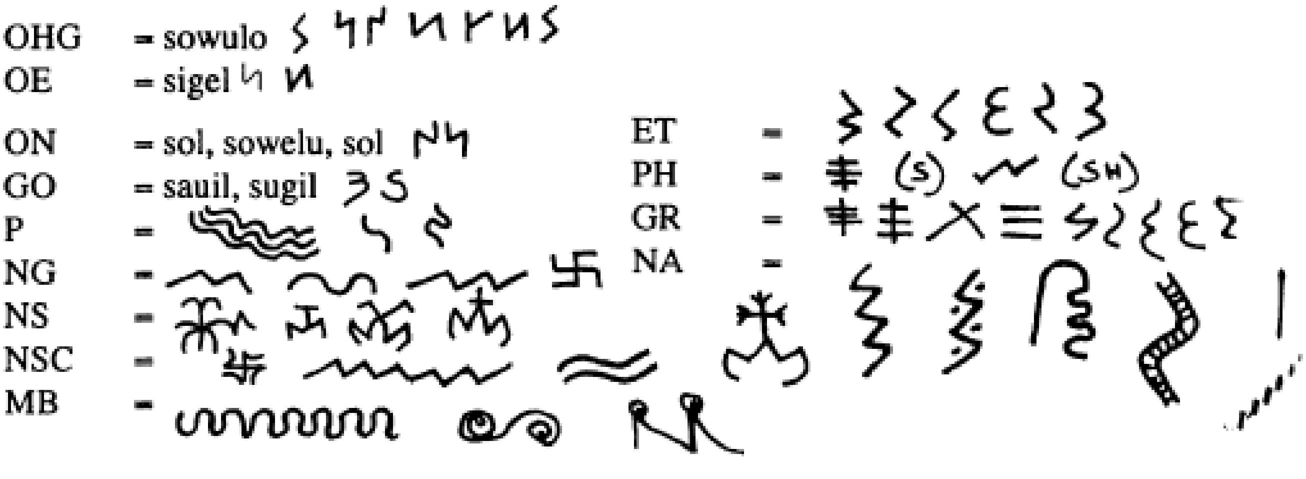
Peorð is a source of recreation and
amusement to the great,
where warriors sit blithely together
in the banqueting hall.





Sigel is a solar rune. In its name the IE roots **sawel-*, **swen-*, **sun-*, can be found, all of which refer to the sun. The solar formula, known in the western occult tradition as the 'formula of IAO' describes the usual pattern of life, death and rebirth. The same idea can be found in the ᛋ shape. Sometimes flowers or branches grow in the ᛋ shape. This happens when the original motion | encounters obstruction ┐, bypasses the trouble ᛋ and proceeds to grow in the original direction. It is the cyclic pattern of growth, crisis and more growth that makes the phenomenon predictable, and if we inquire honestly, we find that this sort of evolution takes place in all forms of learning. We may also consider the ᛋ as part of the solar wheel, the swastika, which goes back to the ages when our ancestors celebrated the solar festivals by rolling huge fire-wheels down a hill. In another sense the ᛋ symbolizes the lightning flash, which was the first source of fire to our ancestors, divine fire that fell from the skies.

In the 18 rune system, ᛋ is called the *Siegrune*. *Sieg* is German for victory, the word goes back to IE **segh-* to hold. The OE *sigel* (sun) is possibly related to such words as *sige-folc* (people of victory), *sige-leas* (without victory), *sige-rof* (rich in victory), the word 'siege' and such terms as *sigan* (to sink, fall descend) and *sigle* (jewellery, treasures). The ON *sigr* (victory) can be found in numerous names, such as Sigurd, Siegfried, Sieglinde, Sigmund or Sigrdrifa (the victory giver). Sigrdrifa is the name of the Valkyrie in the *Sigrdrifumal*. After waking, she sings out a few lines which are considered genuine old invocation chants, greeting the day, the Aesir and asking that victory be given to the seated. Translated into body and posture the ᛋ rune suggests somebody seated or squatting. Another aspect of ᛋ is ON *sel*, *sael*, OHG *salig*, all of which signify 'blessed, holy, joyous, happy'. *Selig* in modern German is 'blissful'. The word *sal* can occasionally be found in religious blessings (or in symble toasts). Legend claims that once there was a branch of the priesthood called the *Seligen* who were known for their healing women and for a deity called 'Fru (lady) Saelda'. It is a curious thing that in German language the sun is feminine. ᛋ got a rather bad reputation during the Nazi reign when members of the *Schutzstaffel* (security squad), the ᛋᛋ, adopted it as their symbol.


OHG = sowulo
OE = sigel
ON = sol, sowelu, sol
GO = sauil, sugil
P =
NG =
NS =
NSC =
MB =
ET =
PH =
GR =
NA =

The Old English Rune Poem

Sigel semannum
symble bith on hihte
∂onne hi hine feriath
ofer fisces beth
oth hi brimhengest
bringeth to lande

Sigel is ever a joy to seafarers
when they journey away
over the fishes' bath
until the courser of the deep
bears them to land.

The Old Norse Rune Poem

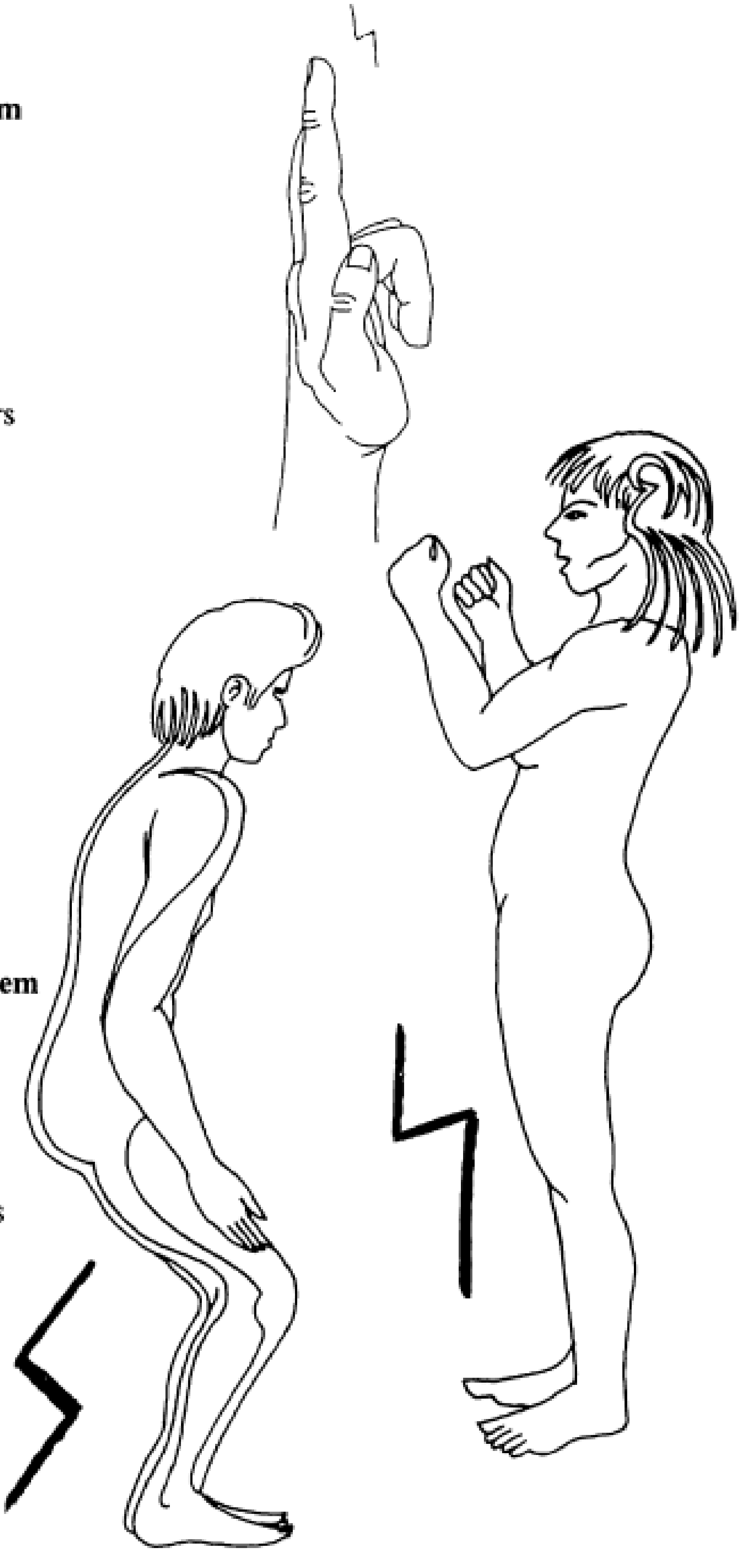
Sól er landa ljóme
luti ek helgum dóme.

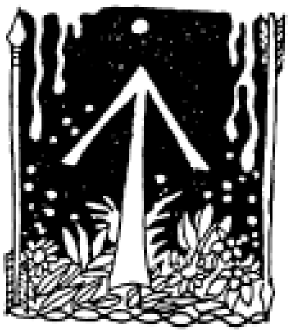
Sol is the light of the world
I bow to the divine decree.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

Sól er skyja skjöldr
ok skinandi rö∂ull
ok isa aldrtregi
rota siklingr.

Sol is the shield of the clouds
and shining ray
and destroyer of ice.
Rota = wheel.





Tir has a rather complex range of interpretations. First of all the rune shows a spear (like that which wounded Odin) or an arrow (such as killed Balder 'by accident'); tools of blood letting. The arrow/spear points in a direction, suggesting motion, development, evolution. Evolution involves two basic forces; the aim is survival, joy, life, procreation and the prize is blood. We all kill to eat, or have others kill our food for us. It is the species that endures and the individual who lives it out. The symbol of bloodletting equals excretion. Two spread legs ᚣ and something pouring out ᛏ. Where ᛉ reaches for heaven, ᛏ lets flow to the earth. Why was Odin wounded? Why did Tir lose his hand? 'Tiu, Tiwaz, Tir' is one of the oldest Indo-European deities. In the *Germania* s/he appears as 'Twisto' (G *Zwitter* = ambisexual), the androgynous ancestor of mankind. This stage is symbolized by two hands. When in the course of development the Fenris wolf (symbol of the gods of chaos) had to be chained (so that ordered society could develop) Tir gave a hand as a hostage. The wolf trusted Tir as Tir was both (I/you, man/woman) and as such the only honest judge. Now the wolf had to be chained, and in the process Tir lost his hand, and his duality. The god of bloodletting had become one-sexual, and as a male deity, menstruation was replaced by warfare. In the Germanic myths, Twisto transformed into Donar-Thor, god of thunder and into Tyr-Zis, the god of war. There is a similar division between the Celtic deities Taranis and Teutates, who come from the same Indo-European stock, as do the Greek Zeus, the Latin Deus, or the Devas of Indian mythology. The Indo-European root **deiw-* refers equally to the sky god and to heaven. The ᛏ or were frequently carved into sword or spear blades. Possible origin for the name is **ter-* to pass over, cross, go through, **ter-* to turn, **deu-* to lack, be wanting, **deu-* to burn, hurt. OHG *tiuno*, OE *teona* = injury, OICE *tjon* = loss, penalty. Another stream of meanings comes from **deuk-* to lead. OHG *tiuhan*, OE *teon*, to pull, draw, lead. OICE *tirr* = honour, fame. OHG *tiuri* = costly, valuable, dear, holy. *Tiuren* = to praise; OE *tir* = fame, honour. The OICE *teinlautartyr* is a sacrificial vessel to receive blood. The figure of the twinned one, Twisto, continued in folklore as the twilight traveller, the double one or devil (OHG *tiuval*). OHG *tiufi* is the depth, the abyss. The spear/arrow of ᛏ points at the *tir-star*, the pole star, which is 'ever on its course over the mists of night and never fails'. In this sense the earth axis itself is the ᛏ pointing to the north. The Tir-star was sometimes called the 'need-nail', the nail that holds the worlds in place and around which the heavens revolve.

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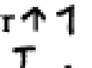
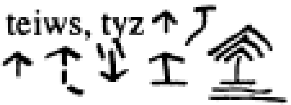
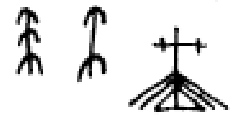
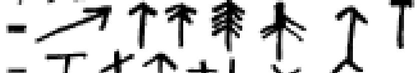
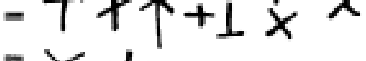
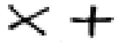
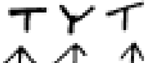
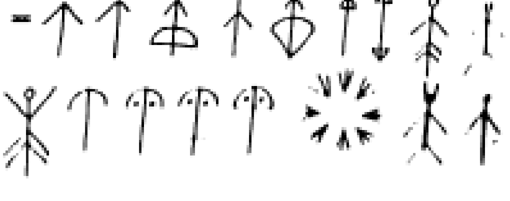
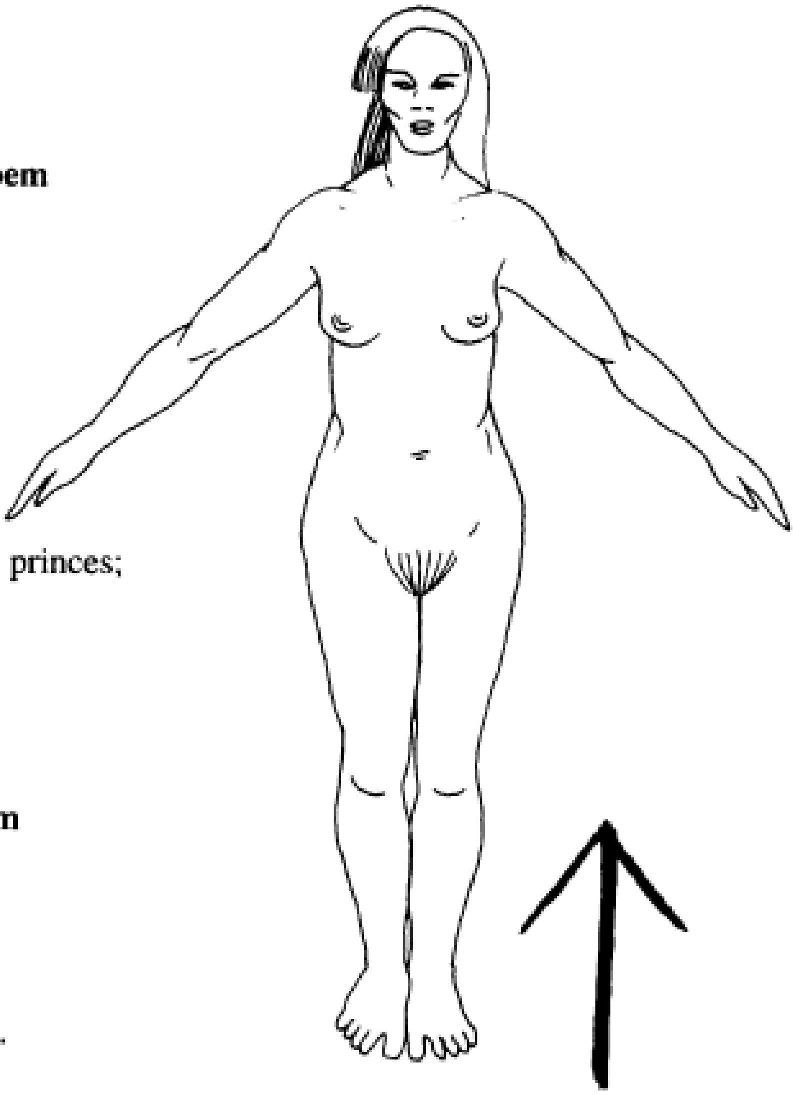
OE = tir, tyr ᛏ
ON = tiu, tiwar, tyr ᛏ ᛐ
Go = teiws, tyz ᛏ 
P = 
NS = 

NSC = 
ET = 
PH = 
GR = 
NA = 



The Old English Rune Poem
Tir bith[3] tacna sum
healde∂ trywa wel
with æthelingas
a bith on færylde
ofer nihta genipu
næfre swiceth

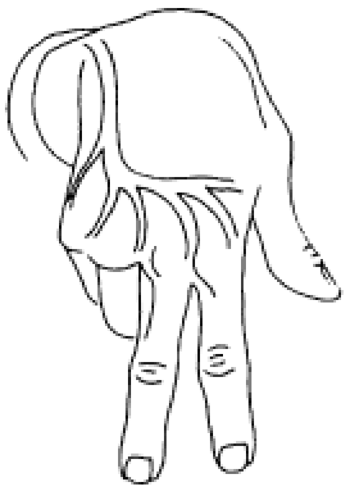
Tir is a (guiding) star
well does it keep faith with princes;
it is ever on its course
over the mists of night
and never fails.

The Old Norse Rune Poem
Tyr er æinendr asa;
opt værdr smi∂r blasa.

Tyr is a one-handed god;
often has the smith to blow.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
Tyr er einhendr áss
ok ulfs leifar
ok hofa hilmir
mars tiggi.

Tyr is a one-handed god
and leavings of the wolf
and prince of temples.



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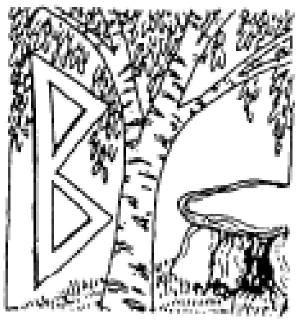
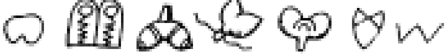
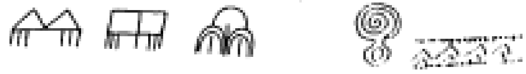
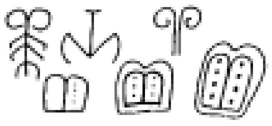
[3] Note variation in spelling from *Byth* given elsewhere, perhaps an old scribe error.



Beorc is one of the tree runes. Though some scholars connect it with the poplar and the OICE poem mentions 'abies', the fir, the basic symbolism points at the birch tree, OHG *birka*, OE *berc*, ON *björka*, which comes from **bher-eg-* to shine, bright, white. The birch was one of the first North European trees to grow after the retreat of the glaciers, a tree of beginning that was involved in numerous spring festivals to sweep out evil influences (broom), to clothe the 'green man', the 'April fool', and to bring the blessings of fresh life, in the shape of consecrated twigs to each home. Sunlight dancing on the foliage; the first day of a new lifetime. The birch is one of the fertility trees, its rune sign suggesting breasts, the breasts and a pregnant belly ᛒ, or a woman on the ground giving birth. The IE root **bher(a)-* to bear, to carry, to endure, to bring is closely connected with the idea of birth. Traces of this can be found in OHG *barnam*, OICE *barn*, Scots *bairn* = a child, ON *burthiz* = birth, OHG *brengan* = to bring, Celtic *Endober*, a carrying-in, OHG *bur*, OE *burlic* = borne up, exalted, burden, OHG *barwon*, OE *bearwe* = basket, barrow.

Then there are OE *beorgan*, OICE *bjarga, barg*. OHG *bergen* = to protect, to hide, shelter, which is the source for *Berg* (G = a mountain fortress), or *Burg* (G = a castle). The Edda mentions *bjargrunar*, runes that protect and hide. Allied is the concept of innocence and simplicity. OHG *bar*, OICE *berr* = bare, nude, open, vulnerable, sometimes even 'without' or 'free'.

The birch cult was probably popular in the megalith religion. In a sense the Berg (mountain) concept (OE = *beorh, beorge*) refers to hills and dolmens. The dolmen structure is the feminine aspect of megalith religion, the womb of stones where rebirth was experienced, deep below the hill. Tradition claims that ᛒ is the rune of the mother goddess. The ᛒ shape can be seen as mountains, yet it can also signify the waves of the sea. OHG *ber*, ON *bara* = a wave. Last, there is the nebulous figure of the lady Berchte, who ends the 'wild hunt' time with her namesday the 6th of January. Her Irish counterpart, the goddess Brigid or Bride (meaning 'bright' and 'exalted') may also be related. Not all of the specification of the OE rune poem fit the birch, who does bear 'fruit and seeds.' This made some scholars search for a more suitable tree, with fairly unconvincing results. I wonder whether the rune actually refers to a species of tree or to a quality of bright green which many trees - including Birch and Spruce - share when the first leaves or shoots appear in spring.

OHG = berkana, brica ᛒ B
OE = beorc, beork ᛒ B
ON = bjarkan, brica, bercana B ᛒ
GO = bairkan, bercna
P = 
NG = 
NS = 
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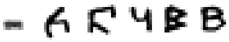
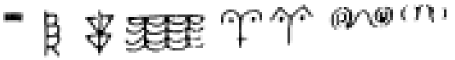
GR = 
NA = 

The Old English Rune Poem
Beorc byth bleda leas
bereth efne swa ∂eah
tanas butan tudder
bith on telgum wlitig,
heah on helme
hrysted fægere
geloden leafum
lyfte getenge

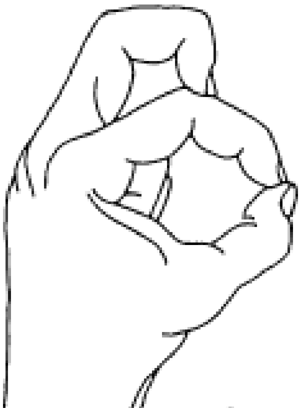
Beorc bears no fruit, yet without
seed it brings forth suckers
for it is generated from its leaves.
Splendid are its branches
and gloriously adorned
its lofty crown
which reaches to the skies.

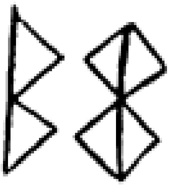
The Old Norse Rune Poem
Bjarkan er laufgrønstr lima
Loki bar flær∂a tima.

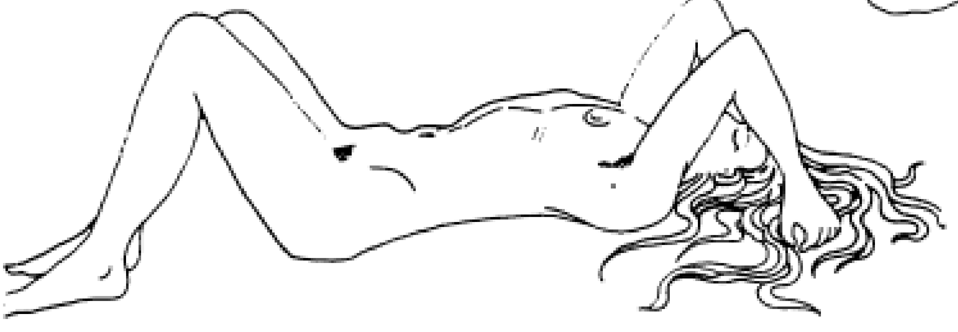
Bjarkan has the greenest
leaves of any shrub;
Loki was fortunate in his deceit.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
Bjarkan er laufgat lim
ok litit tre
ok ungsamligr vi∂r
abies bu∂lungr.

Bjarkan is a leafy twig
and little tree
and fresh young shrub
Abies is a fir [or spruce][4].







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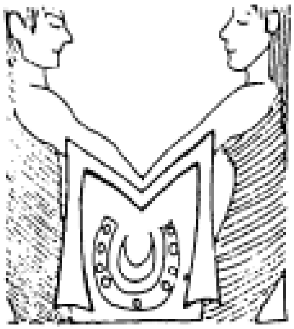
[4] Both have *Abies* in their Latin names

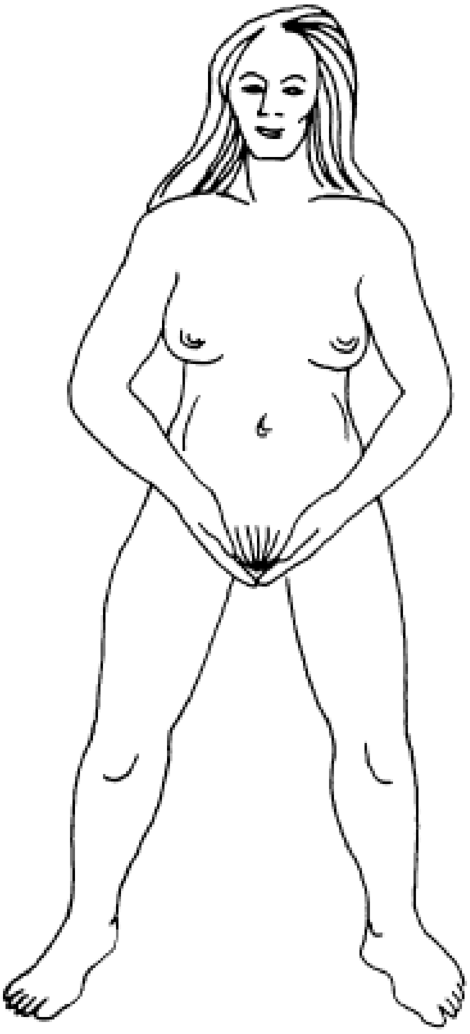


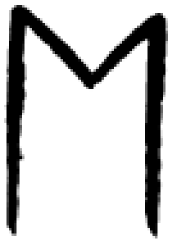
Eh is rune no 19 in the OE poem. The rune is called 'eh' which means *Ehe* – marriage in modern German. (This idea is suggested by the posture of two people in 1 touching hands.) *Eh* goes back to OHG *ehin* – one, *ea, ehwa* – eternity, right, law, forever, *e(o)haft* – just, holy, *ehwart* – high priest, *eban, ebin* – equal, just, in unity, even and OE *ewa* – marriage contract. OICE *ae* – always, ever, *aevi* – lifetime. All of these go back to IE **aiw*- meaning originally 'life force' or 'life span', which later developed into words such as 'aeon' or 'eternity'.The text of the poem is somewhat obscure. We are reminded of horses (see Tacitus on horse cults), the horse being an animal of the moon goddess (Epona in the Celtic) with a hoof print like a moon sickle. Among the Venetian people, who lived at the German/Polish coast of the Baltic, it was a popular custom to keep white horses in the temple of Swantewit, the many faced god. These horses were oracles. For divination a number of lances were erected in a field. The god was invoked, the question asked, and then a sacred horse was released to run through the lances. If it came through without touching or knocking any of them over, the signs were auspicious. But if it did touch any, the signs were bad indeed. Another version was to draw lines on the ground which the sacred horse had to cross without touching. This method was used every year to determine where the Venetians should go raiding. It was successful and Vinetta, the island city, became the richest port in the Baltic before a mighty storm drowned it 'to punish these sinful people for their wealth and greed' as the Christians later put it. Long after the M rune went out of fashion another 'eh' ᛅ was introduced in Scandinavia. It can be seen in certain monkish manuscripts.

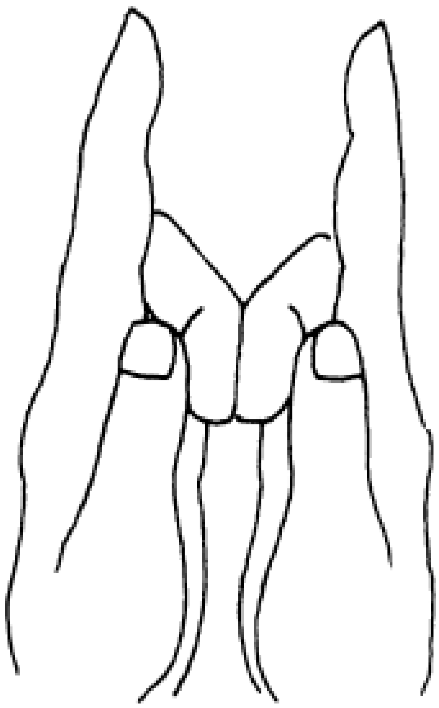
OHG – eh, eihwaz M
OE – eh, eoh M
GO – egeis, eyz M ∈
ET – 𐌄 𐌄
PH – 𐤄
GR = 𐤄 E H

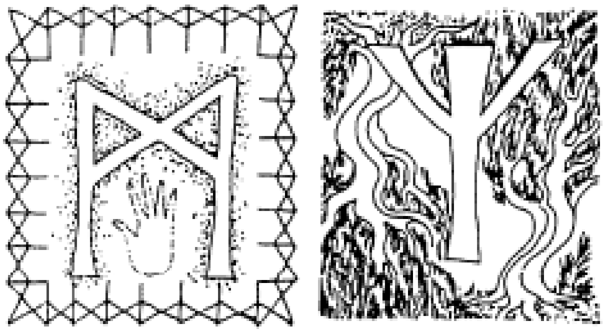
The Old English Rune Poem

Eh byth for eorlum æthelinga wyn hors hofum wlanc ðær him hæleth ymb[e] welege on wiegum wrixlath spræce and bith unstyllum æfre frofur	Eh is a joy to princes in the presence of warriors, a steed in the pride of its hoofs, when rich men on horseback bandy words about it, and it is ever a source of comfort to the restless.



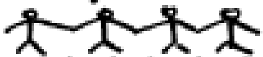
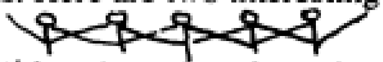






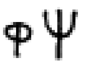
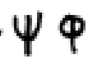
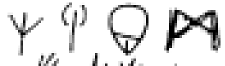
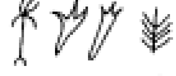
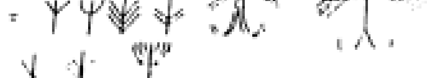
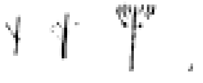
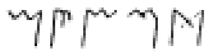
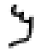
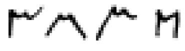
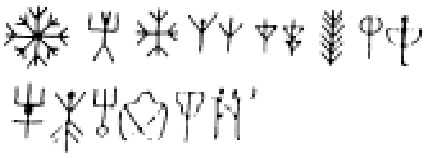
Man is a rune that describes mankind. Some Nazi ideologists have tried to make it the rune of man (while attributing ᛦ to woman) but this sort of division has nothing to do with the original meaning. ᛘ comes from IE **man-*, **manu-*, **manw-*, **manna*, **monu-*, = humans. The roots have much to do with mental activity, **men-* being the source for 'mind'. OE *gemynd* = memory, mind. OICE = *muna*, *man* = to remember. OICE *munda*^{1} = to remember, *munda*^{2} = to divide, make a difference. OICE *munr* is 1st sense, desire, sensation, feeling and 2 to judge, to divide.

OE *myne* = sense, thought, intent, *maenan* = to remember, dedicate, mention. In OHG we encounter the *minne* concept. *Minna* was originally 'memory', and acquired the additional meaning 'love, sympathy'. A *Minnesänger* was a travelling musician who played love songs at the courts, praising the ladies and barely escaping the wrath of their husbands. The term dropped out of fashion when *minne* had become a dirty word. In the ON we find the custom of *drekka minni*, 'to drink minne' out of the *mindebaeger* the 'minne cup', i.e. to drink in honour of someone. The minne cup was often adorned by a frieze of rune signs. Here are two interesting examples:

The latter includes both symbols ᛘ and ᛗ in a form that suggests a chain of people, perhaps a circle of worshippers that link to join the force. Both rune postures, ᛘ and ᛗ have been in use as ritual gestures in almost any culture, no matter when and where. ᛘ expresses 'reaching for the height' while ᛗ, folding the arms across the breast, brings the force down and in. . ᛗ is also two people in the ᛚ position who embrace. The rune poems indicate that man is the 'augmentation of dust', which implies that we are 'lifted up'. They also point out that we are doomed to fail, and to return to the earth that was our origin. There is a certian Christian flavour to these lines.

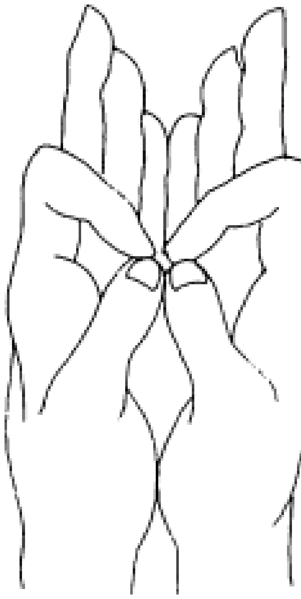
Another, though unproven interpretation suggests that ᛘ is a tree shape, or that of any other plant reaching for the light. We are reminded of the *Myrkwald*, the primal murky forest that covered the entire earth. In the *Edda*, the first two humans are called *Ask* and *Embla* (Gylf. 9) Ask is the ash tree and embla is the alder.

OHG = mannaz, man ᛘ ᛗ 
OE = man ᛗ
ON = man, maðr, mannar ᛘ 
GO = manna ᛗ 𐌼
P = 
NS = 
NSC = 
NG = 
ET = 
PH = 
GR = 
NA = 

The Old English Rune Poem

Man byth on myrgthe
his magan leof:
sceal theah anra gehwylc
oðrum swican
forðam drihten wyle
dome sine
thæt earme flæsc
eorthan betæcan.

The joyous (man) is dear to his
kinsmen; yet every man is doomed
to fail his fellow
since the lord by his decree
will commit the vile carrion
to the earth.



The Old Norse Rune Poem

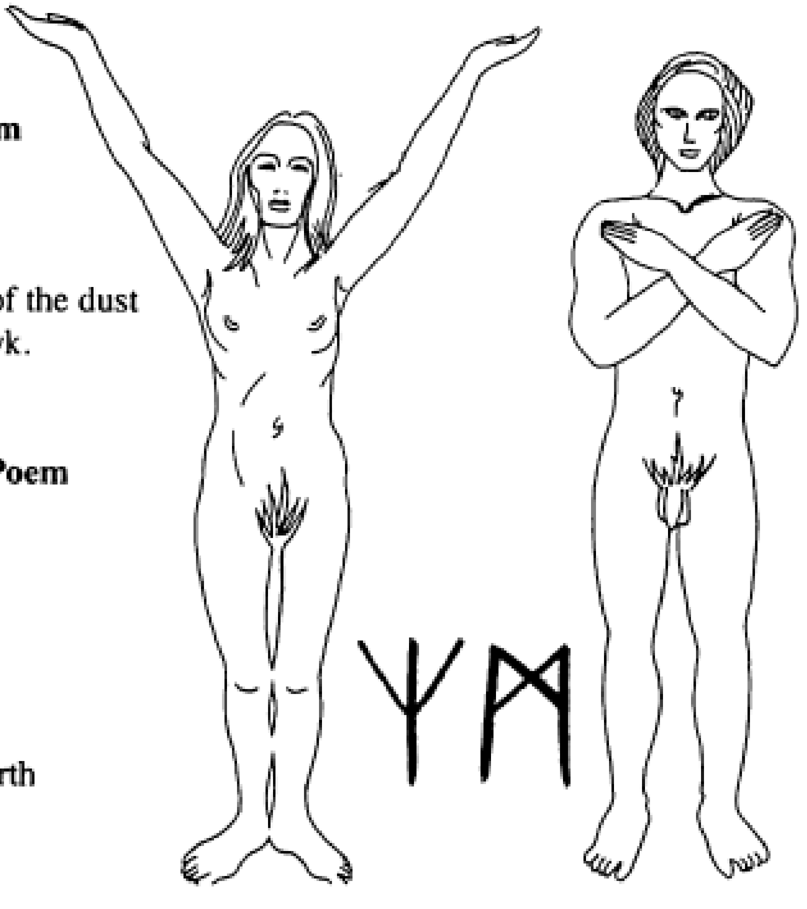
Maðr er moldar auki
mikil er græip a hauki

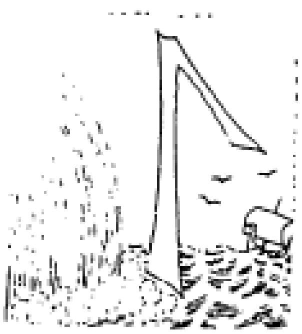
Maðr is the augmentation of the dust
great is the claw of the hawk.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

Maðr er manns gaman
ok moldar auki
ok skipa skreytir
homo mildingr.

Maðr is the delight of man
and augmentation of the earth
and adorner of ships
Homo = man.



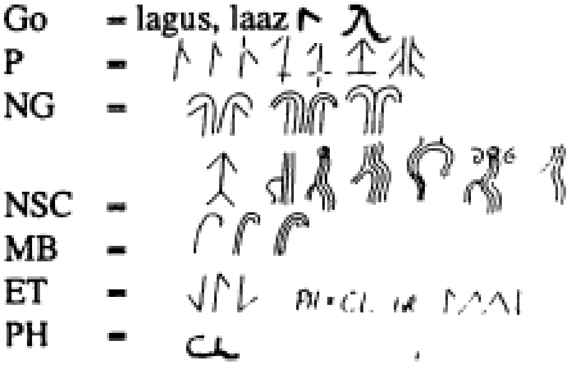


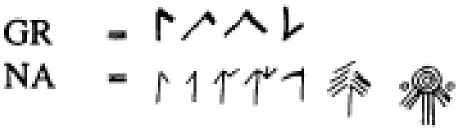
Lagu is a rune of water. The IE **laku-*, **loku-*, a body of water, a lake, a sea, is one of its sources, as are **leg-*, to dribble, trickle, leading to OE *leccan* = to moisten and ON *leki* = a leak. **Lou-* to wash, to bathe, has to do with it and the words OHG *louga*, ON *laug* = lye OICE *lauðr* = foam, soap, *laugardag* = bath-day, *laugask* = to clean oneself, *leygja* = to wash, rinse, *lækr* = stream, *logr* = ocean, OE *lagu* = ocean, lake, river, *lagustream* = ocean current, or the scotch *loch*. We are reminded of what psychology calls 'oceanic feelings' (Reich liked them and Freud did not) the sensation of drifting, flowing, expanding that goes with free sexual experience. In the 18 rune system the rune is called *laf* which is supposed to come from 'love'. Now 'love' comes from **leubh-*, **loubh-* = to care, desire, love, believe (-> leave, -> libido). The connection cannot be proven, but this does not change the psychological relationship, the emotional truth. In another sense the rune has to do with law, which comes from **leg-* = to speak, and developed into Latin *lex* = law (-> legal, -> loyal, -> privilege). ON *lag* = law, laid down. Greek *lògos*, logic etc, OHG *lekjaz* = enchanter. OE *laece* = physician, leech.

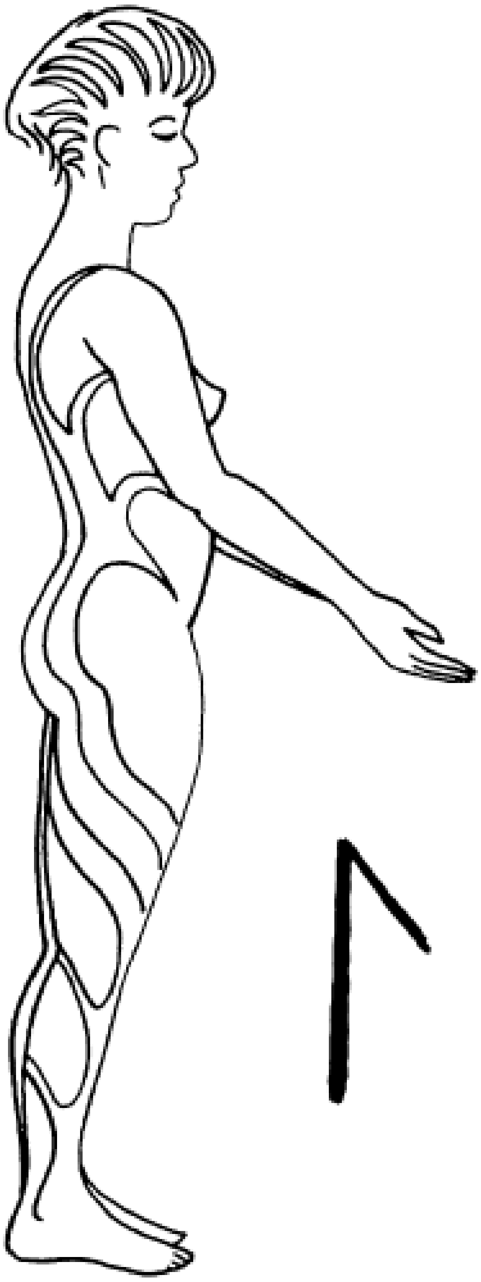
Thelemites should know that 'Love is the Law, Love under Will'. A good law was called 'log laukjofn' or 'laukar löggr', i.e. law as straight as the leek plant (*allium porrum*). Leek is the first plant that appears after the flood (*Edda*, Voluspa), it was often used as a symbol of potency and purification. Before refrigeration it was the first green vegetable to appear after winter. It was sacred to the Celts and is still the national vegetable of Wales. The etheric oils of leek have disinfecting powers. The plant was frequently added to beer, ON *blødlaukar* = bloodleek, the herbs and spices that were thrown into the sacrificial beer. The German word *Lauch* (leek) often occurs in words that signify nobility.

In the St Gallen manuscript the ᛚ rune is called 'lagu the leohto', i.e. the glowing (light) ocean. 'Light' comes from a very similar family of roots. **Leuk-*, **leug-* = to bend, wind, to glow, to shine, being the source for OHG *laug*, *lauc*, *lauga*, OE *leig*, OICE *log*, *loga*, *leygr*, = fire, flame. This is the source of Latin *lux* and ON Loki... whether this phenomenon has to do with the ᛚ rune is an open question.

OHG = laguz lagu ᛚ ᛚ
OE = lagu ᛚ
ON = lagu, lagur, lögr ᛚ
Go = lagus, laaz ᛚ λ







The Old English Rune Poem
Lagu byth leodum
langsum gethuht
gif hi sculun nethan
on nacan tealtum
and hi sæytha
swythe bregath
and se brimhengest
bridles ne gym(eð)

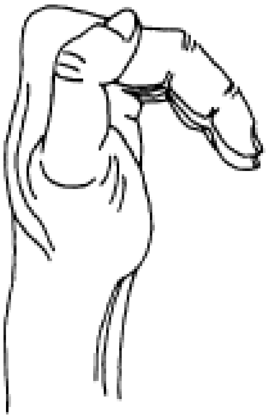
Lagu seems interminable to men,
if they venture on the rolling bark
and the waves of the sea terrify them
and the courser of the deep
heed not its bridle.

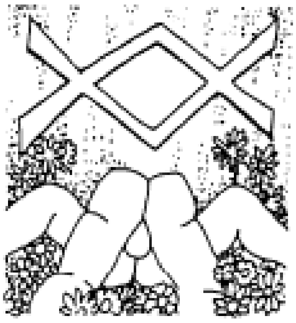
The Old Norse Rune Poem
Logr er, fællr or fjalle
foss; en gull ero nosser.

Logr is a river which falls from
a mountain side;
But ornaments are of gold.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
Lögr er vellanda vatn
ok viðr ketill
ok glömmungr grund.
Lacus lofðungr.

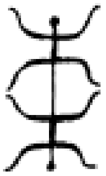
Lögr is eddying stream
and broad geyser
and land of the fish
Lacus is a lake.

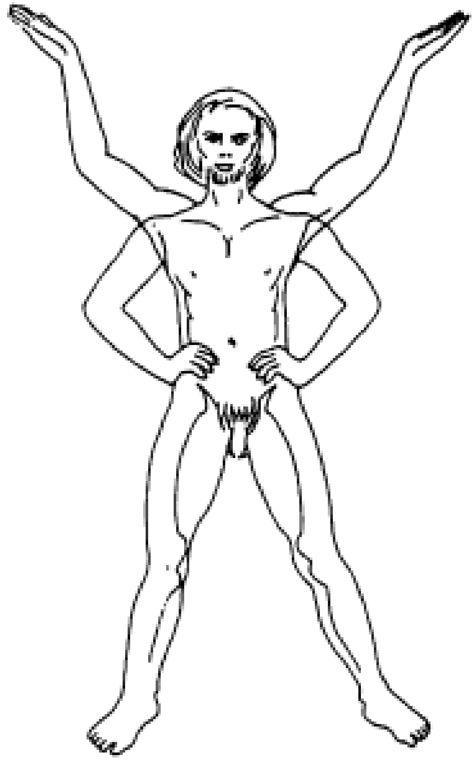




Ing is a rune associated with the fertility gods Ingwi-Freyr and Freya. It is rune no 22 of the OE poem and the common futhorc. Some scholars cite a mother of Frey and Freya, called 'Inguna', but on the whole the name Ingwi describes Freyr himself. xx might be a symbol reflecting the time-honoured custom of making love in the fields, the simplified ◊ being a field shape like ᛋ That the hero Ingwi travels eastward might suggest his re-entry of the source of his origin (east) but this is just guesswork. Some scholars got east and west muddled up and wrote that Ingwi was a Nordic king who travelled across the Atlantic to found the Inca kingdom, there are several bizarre books on the theme.

OHG = inguz, ing □ ◊ ᛝ
OE = ing ᛝ
GO = iggws, enguz X □
NA =

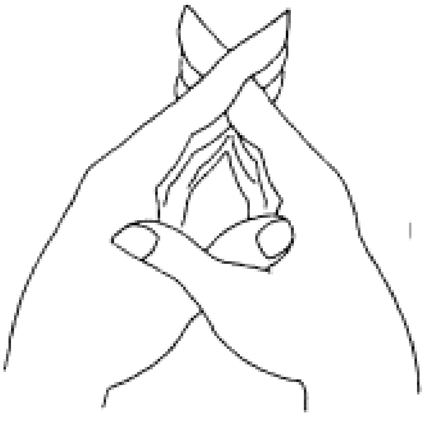


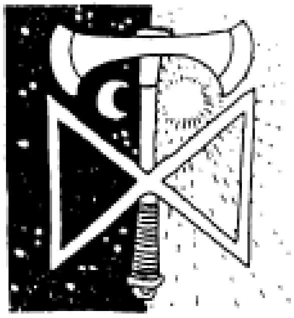


The Old English Rune Poem

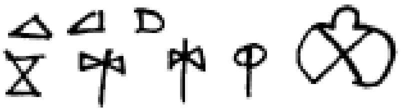
Ing wæs ærest
miә East-Denum
gesewen secgun
oth he siәәan est
ofer wæg gewat;
waen æfter ran;
әus Heardingas
әone hæle nemdun.

Ing was first seen by men
among the East-Danes, till,
followed by his car,
he departed eastwards
over the waves.
so the Heardingas named the hero.



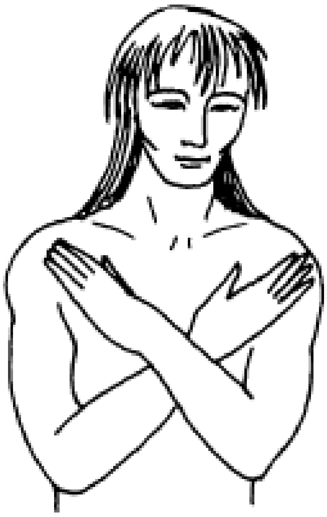


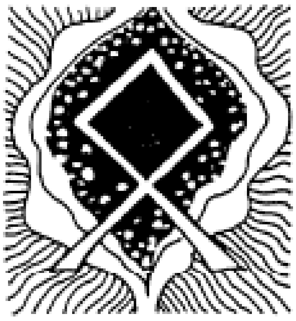
Dæg is rune no 24 of the OE poem. In some versions of the common Germanic futhorc it is the last rune, in others it is the one before ᛟ IE **agh-* = a day, a span of time. **Dheg-*, to burn, heat, are the sources of OICE *dagr*, OE *deag*, OHG *tag*: day. The old idea of 'day' used to nclude 'night', indeed we are told (Tacitus) that time was calculated in nights and night was thought to precede day. Consequently the Germanic 'day' used to begin after sunset, with feasting and celebration. The two halves of ᛞ would symbolize this polarity, and cerebral hemispheres which find the order of polarity obvious and natural (as it reflects them). The ᛞ symbolizes the double axe, which was a sacred weapon both for the megalith cultures and the Indo-Europeans. The double axe, in its earliest form, was made of stone and buried in sacred places. Stone double axes have been found under Menhirs in Brittany. Up until the last century, popular peasant beleif caaled such axes 'thunderbolts'. They were frequently buried under farmhouses to protect them against lightning. The symbol was probably a sign of duality/polarity, much like the Chinese yin/yang symbol, like summer/winter, day/night and woman/man it reflects union, communication, equilibrium. Note that 'double axe cultures' were usually aggressive.

OHG = dag, dagaz ᛞ ᛞ
OE = dæg ᛞ ᛞ
GO = dags, daaz ᛞ a
PH = ∆
GR = △ ◁ D
NA = 

The Old English Rune Poem
Dæg byth drihtnes sond
deore mannum
mære metodes leoht,
myrgth and tohiht
eadgum and earmum
eallum brice.

Dæg, the glorious light of the creator,
is sent by the lord, it is beloved of men,
a source of hope and happiness
to rich and poor,
and of service to all.



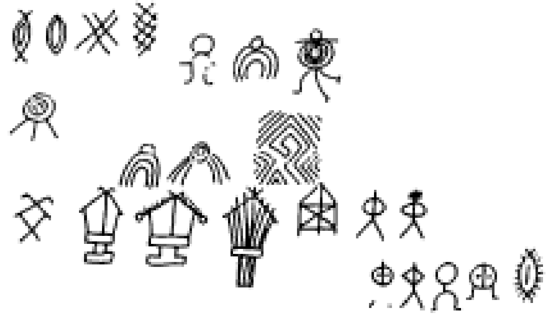


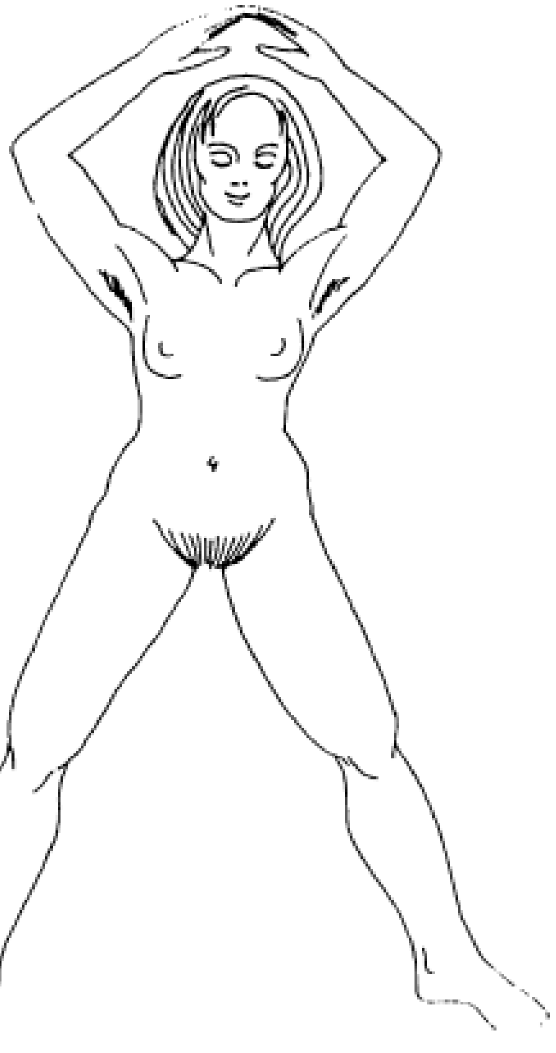
Ethel is a mystery. The rune is number 23 of the Old English poem but number 24 (the end) in some other common futhorc rows. Possible roots for *othil* are: **ud-* out, utmost, **eti-*, above, beyond and **udero-* the womb. ᛟ is the 'ancestral country', Eden, Daath, Dathyl or perhaps the bone fortress Oeth and Anoeth (-> Noatuan), of which Squire tells us that it was built out of bones like a beehive with numerous chambers like a labyrinth. The OICE *edli* = nature, being, *odal* = inherited country, *odlingr* = nobility, OHG *ot* = treasure, property, *uodil, odhil* = property, inheritance, home-land.

It is an interesting question which 'ancestral home' or 'country of origin' the ᛟ rune will reveal to you. Some get visions of the migration moves, others see the island culture loosely called 'Atlantis' and others, like myself, emerge in the dawn ages, the early Paleolithic periods.

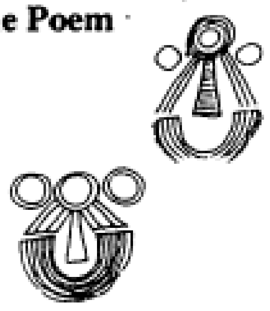
In Qabalistic terms, ᛟ is Eden, Daath, the abyss out of which life and identity sprang and into which being dissolves on its journey into self (present and absent). The Nazis used the ᛟ symbol to signify the home front. The rune posture is often used to discharge excess energy into the ground.

OHG = othil, othila ᛟ ᛟ ᛟ
OE = ethel ᛟ ᛟ
GO = othal, ural ᛟ ᛟ
PH = O
GR = O Ω
P =
NSC =
NS =
NG =
NA =



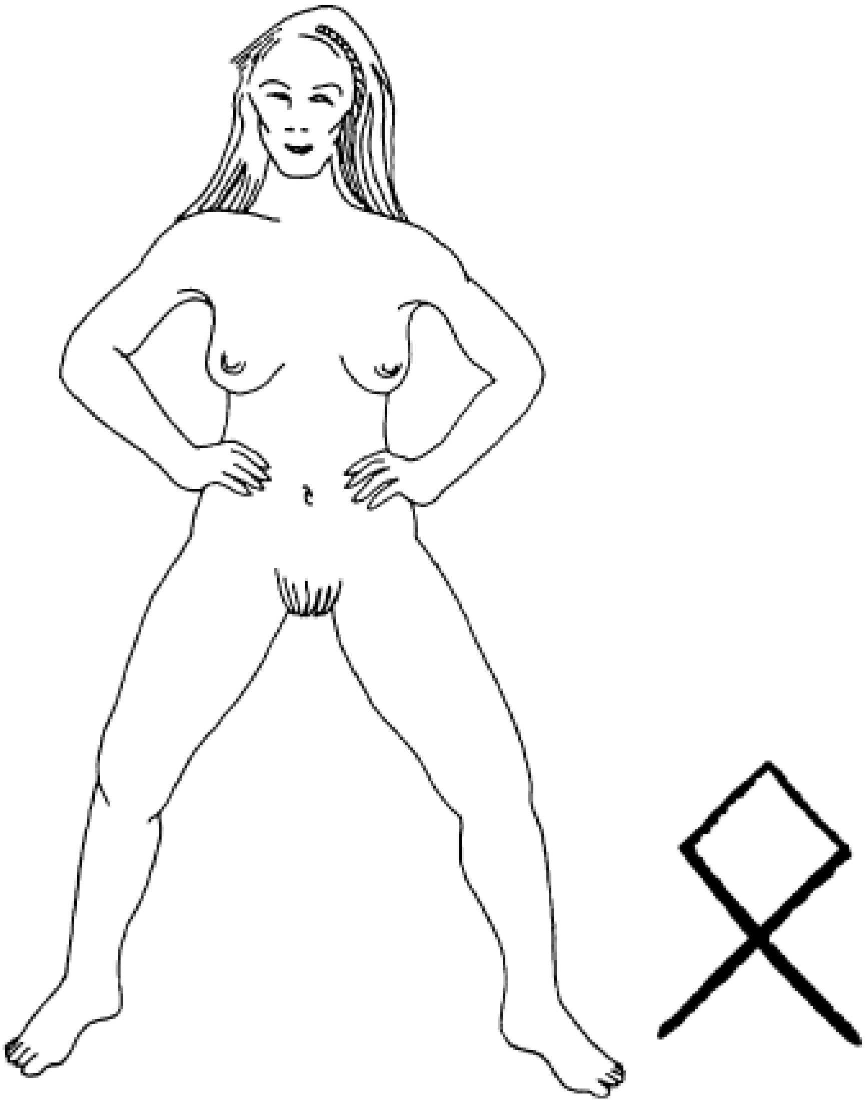


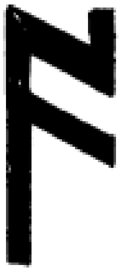
The Old English Rune Poem
Ethel byth oferleof
æghwylcum men
gif he mot ær rihtes
and gerysena on
brucan on bolde
bleadum oftast.



Ethel is very dear to everyman,
if he can enjoy there in his house
whatever is right and proper
in constant prosperity.

The 24 runes treated above are the commmon Germanic futhorc. In England several runes were developed out of the basic continental range. Some of them are described in the *Old English Rune Poem*. These runes are enigmatic. Few scholars have offered sensible interpretations, and I am no exception to the rule. I offer them for the sake of completeness. Do your own research!



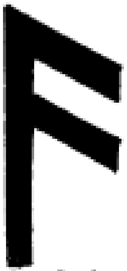


Ac is a variation of ᚨ its sound is an ‘a’. The rune describes the oak tree (MHG *eich*, OHG *eih*, ON *eik*, OE *ak*, *ac*, from IE **ayg*-). Oak and beech trees were the food sources for pigs (which were driven into the woods for fattening every Autumn. The word ‘acorn’ is related, from the IE **og*- growth, wild fruit. There is so much folklore connected with the donar-oak that I can only suggest that you read it up in the usual source books. The oak tree is connected with the lightning flash, which may have to do with the fact that oaks love to grow on subterranean water streams. To the population, the ‘thunder oak’ was the place where justice was given. The oak is often a symbol for endurance and loyalty, this has to do with its ability to live long and the way it develops its foliage late in spring but retains it longer than any other leaf-bearing tree. The acorn, with its shape like glans penis, is an ancient symbol of fertility. Acorns were not just a welcome food for pigs. In times of famine, the acorns were watered for days (to get the bitter taste out) and used as meal powder for soups or bread. The bitter astringents of the oak supply a useful medicine that resolves wounds and sores, cleans the skin, eases swollen glands and helps - in the form of a rather ghastly tea - cure diarrhoea.

The Old English Rune Poem

Ac byth on eaorthan
elda bearnum
flæsces fodor
fereth gelome
ofer ganotes bæth;
garsecg fandath
hwæther ac hæbbe
æthele treowe.

Ac fattens the flesh (of swine)
for the children of men.
Often it traverses the gannets bath
and the ocean proves whether Ac
keeps faith in honourable fashion.

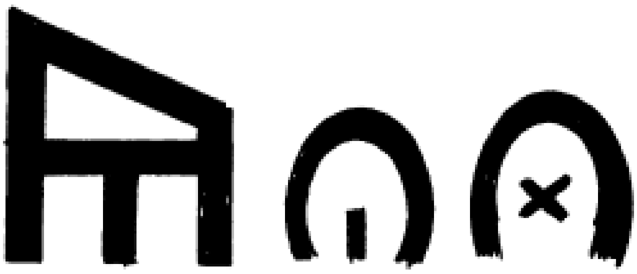


Aesk is number 26, and the ash tree. The rune was developed out of the common Germanic ᚨ which looks like ᚩ in the OE poem (rune number 4). The symbolism of the ash has been treated in that chapter. The leaves and seeds of the ash are a good diuretic (increasing urine) medicine that is often used to clean the body of accumulated waste. External application is good for rheumatism, muscle-ache and arthritis. The mountain ash or rowan (not related to the ash tree) is also good for healing - the leaves and blossoms produce a tasty tea that stimulates the bladder and kidneys, eases stomachache and diarrhoea, the flowers being a good help against bronchitis and coughing. In the old days, it seems, there were few trees which weren't used for healing one way or another.

The Old English Rune Poem
Aesk bith oferheah,
eldum dyre
stith on stathule,

stede rihte hylt,
∂ea him feohtan on
firas monige.

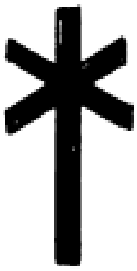
Aesk is exceedingly high and precious to men.
With its sturdy trunk it offers a stubborn
resistance, though attacked by many a man.



Yr is number 27, another version of ᛦ, it seems. As a commentary Dickins offers a well-deserved 'questionmark', and so far few scholars have found better explanations. The sign could refer to a saddle, a tent or a blanket, plus several dozen other items which make just as much sense. I leave the guesswork to you.

The Old English Rune Poem
Yr byth æthelinga
and eorla gehwæs
wyn and wyrthmynd
byth on wicge fæger
fæstlic on færelde
fyrdgeatewa sum.

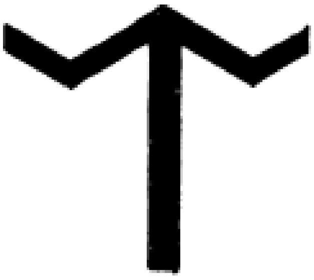
Yr is a source of joy and honour
to every prince and knight,
it looks well on a horse
and is a reliable equipment
for a journey.



Number 28, **Iar** is a mysterious amphibious creature which cannot be defined easily. Attempts to explain it as a frog or eel have been made. My own guess is that ᛡ is a picture of a beaver. Now you might complain that a beaver is no fish. This is true from the modern point of view. Up to the late medieval time the beaver (and the fish otter) were considered 'fish', which made them welcome food for the rich on fridays and during the fasting seasons.

The Old English Rune Poem
Iar byth eafix
and ∂eah a bruceth
fodres on foldan
hafath fægerne eard
waetre beworpen
∂aer he wynnum leofath

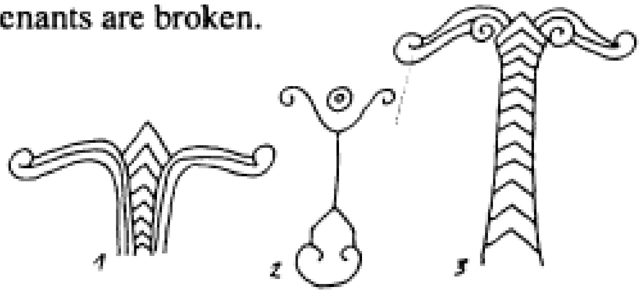
Iar is a river fish and yet it always
feeds on land; it has a fair abode
encompassed by water,
where it lives in happiness.



Ear, ᛠ number 29 is the sound *ea, eo*, meaning 'water' in Old English. *Ea* in OHG = eternity. (see Ehwaz). It has been claimed that *Ea* is found both in 'sea' and 'earth' (from IE **er*- earth, ground). Then there is a curious deity called Eor, Ear, Er, Iar who gave his name to the 'Irminsul', from OHG **irmino*- large, whole, and *sul*, pillar. The Irminsul is the pillar that holds heaven and earth in place, the world axis, in a sense, and the human spine. OHG *ermin* = whole, universal. The Irminsul, as a ritual object, was destroyed by Charlemagne.

The Old English Rune Poem
Ear byth egle
eorla gehwylcun
∂onne fæstlice
flæsc onginneth
hraw colian
hrusan ceosan
blac to gebeddan
bleda gedreosath
wynna gewitath
wera geswicath

Ear is horrible to every knight,
when the corpse quickly begins to cool,
and is laid in the bosom of the dark earth.
Prosperity declines, happiness passes away
and covenants are broken.



Three Irminsul symbols, 1 from a Philistine cup (1100 BC), 2 fibula of Vegstorp (Bronze age) and 3 the Old Saxon Irminsul sign.

29

To Rune With Deep

So far, I have tried to provide you with a set of new tools and techniques. These tools are the rune signs and similar symbols, the techniques are practices such as divination, sigil crafting, song, posture, astral projection and so on. The articles on history and ethnology should have given flesh and belief to the signs. The various experiments may have produced a few new experiences which, I hope, have enriched your patterns of ritual and festivity.

Now we come to a topic which is very dear to my heart. It is the exploration of new territory. Maybe these lines will make more sense to your subconscious mind than to you. Previously, I have dealt with particular methods and specific techniques. Now I would like to 'rune' about the patterns that are behind the technique, about the structures of consciousness and about the models that seem to describe them. This chapter will present several models. Like those in previous chapters, they are meant to organize experience. They cannot represent 'the truth', none of us is equipped to experience anything but a personal truth, nor do they describe an 'objective reality', whatever that may be. None of these models is strictly true or real, but if you put them into practice you will find that they produce results.

The 'true history' of the runes, for instance, matters very little compared to the question of what you may do with them. The 'real nature' of the subconscious mind is less important than the 'how do I get in touch with it?' Nor am I only speaking of runes, there are several magical currents (or world views) woven into this net. They have found earthing around the futhorc system, but then they could just as easily be applied to any other system of magical symbolism and practice.

With sufficient experience you may forget about the rune signs and replace them with any other magical symbolism that suits your fancy. There is a secret centre to all magick; the heart and tongue of Helruning, of speaking with the deep. Let us remember, hell is the realm and consciousness of the hidden, forgotten, repressed and unborn, the veiled land of in-between, the outland beyond the limits of our mind, the abyss of horror and dispersion, the earth of origin and innocence and the vastness that defies our comprehension. Hel[1] or Helja can also be seen as an entity, a personification of the deep realm, and this anthropomorphic representation gives us the opportunity of direct communication - we can talk with the sentience as though it were a friend. The Helrunar learns to be a friend of this entity, and learns to rune with it.

To rune is to talk, sing, chant, whisper, scream or keep silence. Hel and Helja, as you will understand, are metaphors that describe certain phenomena and permit certain modes of interaction. These are not the whole truth, but true enough for our purposes. Other metaphors for the deep realm offer different, and equally valid visions of the inexplicable. In psychology, the hidden reaches are often called 'the subconscious mind' or 'the unconscious', meaning those parts of our selves of which we are unconscious most of the time. The unconscious mind is not unconscious at all, indeed it is far more conscious than we are, as it receives an immense amount of sensory information, far more than our conscious minds could cope with. Are you conscious of your heartbeat right now, of your breath rate, the chemistry of your gastric juices, your hormone production or the muscular tone in your left foot? Do you know how to laugh, how to walk, swim or ride a bicycle? How do you manage to go to sleep and how do you wake up? Can you remember how you learned to stand, to walk, to run? Your subconscious mind knows these things and does them for you. You do not even have to be aware of them, you can do them and they happen 'automatically'. Learning to walk was very difficult when you were young. Nowadays you do it without even noticing. In exactly the same fashion you have learned to do millions of difficult things, and you have learned them so well that you do not even have to be conscious of them. This allows you to concentrate your attention on other activities.

The unconscious mind has a fantastic range of strategies, habits and routines which keep us in action and sustain our world-view, our concepts of reality. More so, it contains an immense store of memories of events and sensual impressions and has methods of using this material in a creative fashion. By night it creates entire dream worlds out of this material, by day it receives the overwhelming flood of sense-data, orders it according to belief, filters it according to priorities, providing the conscious identity with a small range of selected experiences and 'forgetting' (storing) the rest. The outcome of this selective and constructive process is what we consider 'reality'.

Reality functions by habit. There are also inner functions. Where do dream visions come from? How do thoughts arise? Do you think in pictures, in words or feelings? Where do these come from? Is it your ego, or some subconscious aspect of 'self' that creates your daily moods, your energy level, your spontaneous reactions, the impulses of desire and dread that motivate you? How does the unconscious mind create such notions like sympathy, antipathy, doubt, hope, belief, trust, confidence, regret, shame, weariness, eagerness, enthusiasm and so on? All of these create a climate, an atmosphere which gives substance to your reality. You may think that you make your own conscious and reasonable decisions, but then your decision will only look, sound and feel good when the subconscious mind agrees. More often than not, it is the deep mind that provides impulse, choice and motivation, and it is the conscious 'I' that receives these, finds some reasons and explanations for them and thinks it has come to a sensible decision. Healing and wholeness depend on good communication with the deep realm. Reasonable people who fight unconscious beliefs become sick or worse yet, cut themselves off from their living core of joy, inspiration and vitality.

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[1] Spelt Hel in the *Edda*, Helja in the OHG and Holle in numerous folk tales.

What then, is the nature and will of this 'subconscious mind?' As it takes place largely outside of our awareness, and all that we perceive is what it shows to us, this question is rather hard to answer. The curious thing is that the behaviour of the unconscious mind seems to accord with what we believe about it. Socrates called it his 'daemon' and was thankful for the inspiration it provided. Abra-Melin called it his 'Holy Guardian Angel' and offered prayer and thanksgiving to it. Crowley, who used Abra-Melin's method to make contact with his Holy Guardian Angel, considered it his artistic genius and named it as the source of his best poems and magical rituals. Quite typically, he explained the 'HGA' as a phenomena that can be seen as a personified expression of the unconscious mind, or as a distinct entity with super-human power and intelligence. Both of these explanations are quite true, and there are many others of equal validity. In this case, the magical description of the deep realm is much more efficient than the psychological. Too many psychologists see the subconscious aspects of self as a potential threat.

Now it may be true that the subconscious mind can cause troubles, but this is not what it is there for. Such troubles can arise from misunderstanding between the conscious mind and the deep realm, they can occur when the deep mind learns the wrong sort of strategies or clings to methods that are out of date. All of this can happen, but it is not what should happen. The deep mind tries to do its best for the whole system, and when if finds its methods inefficient it will do its best to change them. If you want to effect a healing you will have to ask the deep mind to do so. The conscious mind, the reasonable identity, can't do this job on its own. The real changes, the transformations of life and experience, come from the subconscious mind. You will find that your subconscious mind wants to heal and will work wonders to improve the situation. The system works on feedback. When the conscious and unconscious aspects learn to work in friendly cooperation healing happens naturally.

Shamanism offers another interesting model. A shaman will not speak of such things as a 'subconscious mind', which is a very abstract and obscure concept, but of a variety of 'spirits'. These spirits are considered definite entities. Usually, a shaman works with spirits that appear in natural forms. There are beast-spirits, plants, trees, fungi, stones, crystals, ancestral figures, archetypal figures (such as the 'first shaman') mythical beings, spirits of the scenery, star spirits and beings of the outer reach and so on. All of these represent parts of the subconscious mind but they are treated as if they were individual entities. These spirits have definite purposes. In many a shamanic world view, the mind is viewed as an ecological system with many different life forms that depend on each other. In a healthy mind the system is in balance and all beings get what they require. What the psychologist calls the 'subconscious' is the sum of the whole ecological system. The shamans describe it as the great spirit that unites and harmonizes all life. When a person gets sick, the shaman often considers the disease as the work of an angry or unhappy spirit. This may seem crude if you have learned that you must find the 'real cause' of a disorder through years of psychoanalysis, but then we should remember that the weary task of analysis produces reasons, not healing. If we ask 'why' we will get any amount of justification and personal history.

The shaman says 'the spirits did it', and proceeds to do something about it. Often enough, the shaman finds that the so-called 'angry spirit' is not evil but simply trying to follow its essential nature. We can learn to come to terms with it, to find an agreement that is pleasant for all concerned. Some spirits are 'angry' as they feel that the conscious mind is restricting them. When I do not allow my beast spirits enough action, physical motion, body consciousness or sex they certainly get edgy, then angry. All parts of the self want to follow their nature, and if you ignore, restrict or deny them, they will find ways of telling you so. Some of these ways can be rather unpleasant, so why not ask them from time to time '*hey! subconscious mind, do you have a message for me? Does any part of you wish to tell me something?*'

Does this sound too simple? Do you have to make it more complicated, through the use of a consecrated circle, a prayer wand, a holy symbol, special incense, ritual, fasting, robes and what not so that you may believe in it? It is your belief that determines whether the rite works. If you believe in complicated procedures and serious occult study you will certainly get what you asked for.

The many spirits that populate the shaman's world are often coordinated by a greater spirit, who acts as a helper for the shaman. A shaman may work with several spirit-helpers, who work divination, exorcise unwanted influences, control ritual, sort out disease, provide power, offer advice and so on. Such spirits possess a lot of sentience and individuality. They can be considered alternative identities of the shaman. In their own special function they are much more efficient than the conscious mind. Many magical traditions claim that it is difficult to make contact with such beings. This may occasionally be true, but is not always so. Some spirits, especially the more powerful ones like the Guardian Angel of the Abra Melin system may require months, if not years of intense ritual, prayer and purification. Others may come on their own accord when the time is ripe, and appear in dreams and visions to tell the shaman that they wish to be integrated.

This is one of the aspects of magick that is frequently ignored. The spirits and god forms want to be enacted, want to be integrated in ritual, want to be lived in living flesh. It is not enough to merely contemplate such things, the shaman must allow the spirits to act through his or her body, allows them to obsess, to take control. This takes a measure of trust and experience.

Thus is outlined some of the models that describe the nature of the deep mind. I have no intention of discussing whether 'spirits', 'Egos', 'Guardian Angels' or 'subconscious minds' exist or not. In themselves, these terms are meaningless. If we use them for practice, however, we will find that things happen. When we speak to the 'subconscious mind' we do not have to define what it may or may not be; the point is that something answers. Who answers? It depends on your belief.

Austin Spare pointed out that the more you are interested in yourself, the more will this self be interested in you. As Richard Bandler and John Grinder emphasized, there are no useless or troublesome parts in the minds. Each part of the mind, like every life form in an ecosystem, does its best to fulfill a useful function for the whole. Maybe it uses problematic strategies to do its job, but in essence its function is meant to be good for you. If we accept this point of view, change becomes a fairly easy matter; we simply have to find better strategies to improve the situation. Now one of the troubles in this process is the fact that very few of us bother to consider the deep realm. In growing up we all received a lot of negative conditioning, sad beliefs in the necessity of duty, suffering, pain, disappointment and so on. All of these reduce sensitivity. This is the barrier, the shell of armour that keeps the ego apart from self and the world around. If we want to make contact with the essentially life-embracing aspects of ourselves we have to get past the barrier, have to find ways to suspend the restrictive belief long enough for the deep mind to receive a stimulus to change. We have to speak a language that the deep mind understands. We also have to speak it in a way that does not make the ego throw up resistance.

Here arises the importance of trance, which suspends the limited beliefs of the ego and opens its reality for new choices, and of subtle suggestions which slip past the ego unnoticed. Trance is a phenomena that is frequently misunderstood, as many people tend to have firm and dramatic beliefs about it. Introverted or mystical trances are supposed to look like total paralysis in some holy posture, complete with total sensory withdrawal plus a generous measure of amnesia, while extroverted, or shamanic trances come in a package that includes violent twitches, rolling eyes, foaming mouth, a deplorable lack of manners and a full 'blackout' of the conscious identity. Of course such trances do happen on occasion, but on the whole they are rare and quite unnecessary (unless one indulges in show business as part of the job). Most trances are so common that they are not recognized as such. What happens when a friend tells you a story? All you get is a bare selection of words, symbols that mean one thing to your friend and quite another one to you. Nevertheless your mind clothed them in images, sounds and feelings until the experience was vivid and your reaction intense. In a sense a good story teller is a master in hypnosis.

One of my favourite games is to watch the people on the Underground. By the time they have come down the escalator and enter the platform a curious transformation comes over them. Their timing changes - when they enter the train their bodies show all sorts of trance symptoms (i.e. the switch from sympathetic to parasympathetic nervous system). Their muscle tone changes, which relaxes face and posture, and so does their skin colour and breath rate. Politeness requires that people do not look at each other and so everybody stares into some vague nothingness and waits. Soon enough people begin to hallucinate, i.e. to day-dream, to wallow in memories, to hold inner dialogues, to doze or centre their attention on a book or newspaper which swiftly swallows their entire awareness. Some of them fall into their trance so deeply that they forget to get off and come 'awake' with a jolt. By the time they leave the station their faces are set in the usual, tensed mask again. These people experience a passive trance that is induced through boredom, waiting, lack of interest, monotonous experience etc., and do not even notice it. The same thing happens at boring lectures or classes, during long train or car rides and with any other repetitive, automatic activity. If you close your eyes, relax, calm down and focus your attention on a given word, picture, feeling etc, you get exactly the same effect.

'Becoming a tree', 'merging with the scenery', 'counting breath', 'contemplating a symbol' and other exercises from this book use the same method. These trances may be more intense than the everyday kind as they should capture more of your attention, but this is a difference in degree, not in nature. Awareness of inner activity reduces outside awareness and vice versa. Some trances, such as exhaustion, crisis or being in love, colour the entire vision of outside reality, provided reality is noticed at all.

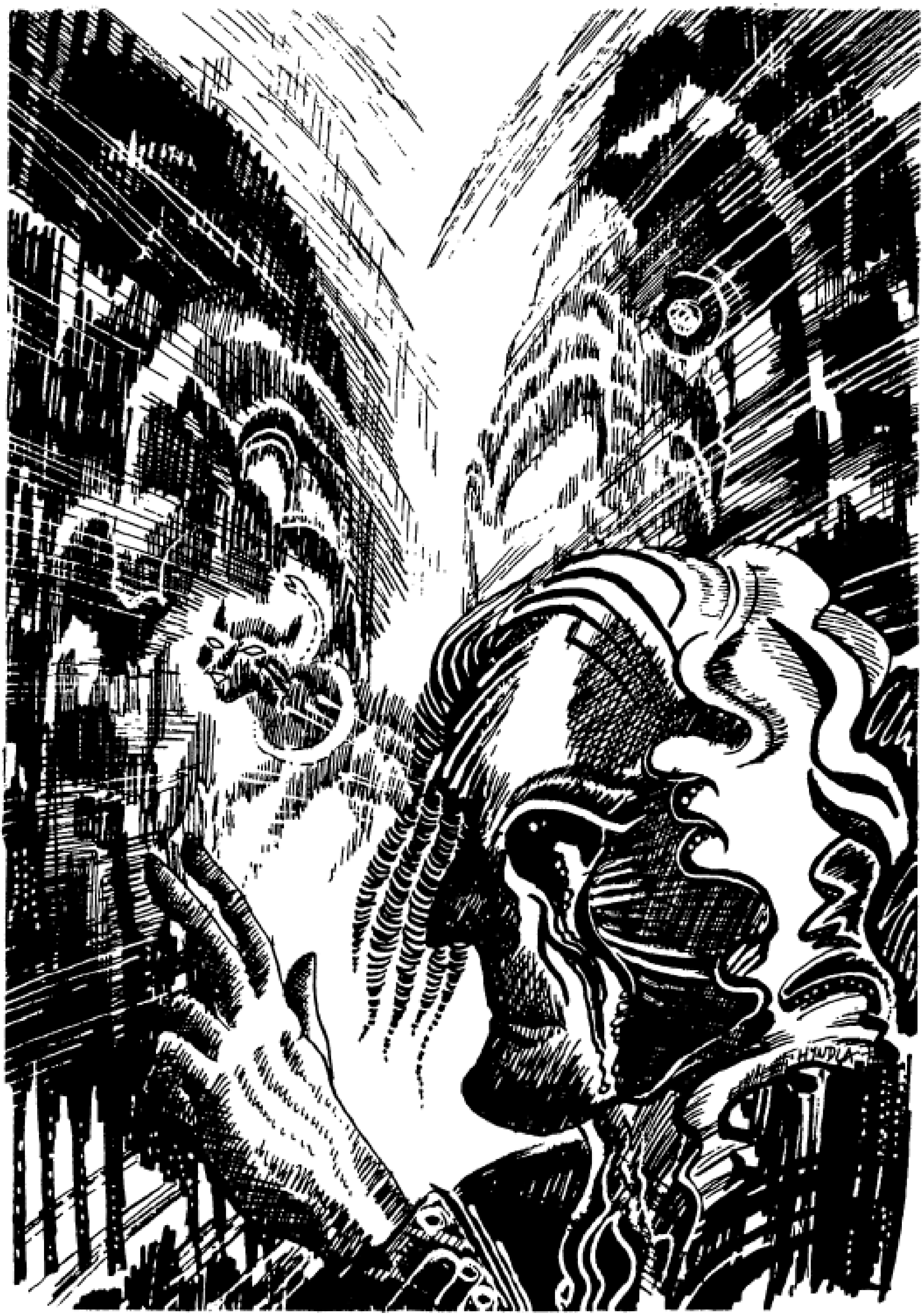
'Active trances' are a similar phenomenon. If you dance and sound a monotonous rhythm on a gong, bell, drum or rattle for long enough you will fall into a typical shamanistic trance state. Any word, gesture, motion or sound that is repeated for a period of sufficient length induces trance, and it matters very little whether it happens in dancing, chanting, prayer or in riding a bicycle, jogging through the park, washing clothes by hand or making love. Indeed, a good dance is also a natural trance.

These are 'active' or 'extroverted' trances in as far as they work by doing something in repetition in outside awareness. Rune song and dance are good examples of this sort of thing. Of course the distinction between 'active' and 'passive' trances is relative. Both methods can easily be combined and will effect much better results than a specialization.

What then, is 'trance' exactly? In a sense, the experience narrows your field of awareness (i.e. you forget all sorts of inessential things) but in another it intensifies it. Drawing pictures, making music, calculating maths, making love, going for a long walk, reading books (and writing them) are all trance states. The 'depth' of these trances depends on your involvement in them. Another aspect of this process is the change in awareness, which results in a different perception. A problem that seems hopeless to the everyday awareness may appear quite different in trance. Perhaps you will perceive in greater detail, or your intuition may work more easily. Compulsive drives may fade away and possibly you perceive new choices, new ways of sensing and doing your will. The subconscious mind is more easily contacted in these states and its answers are perceived with greater clarity.

Hypnotherapy uses trance to offer more freedom to the mind. The same happens in most systems of meditation and magick. Trance depth, however, is not necessarily equal to efficiency. Psychologists have wasted decades in the attempt to measure trance depth with a couple of hare-brained performances that may or may not have anything to do with healing. Arm levitation, for instance, is mainly show business and a firm proof for something or other. The real miracle is that the subconscious mind of anybody is interested in playing such games at all. A deep trance is no guarantee of a healing or of the acceptance of suggestion, it is merely a state of consciousness. Sometimes we need deep trances to make contact with the subconscious mind and sometimes a few fitting words in everyday awareness will do the job just as well. What counts is the effect of the operation, not the measures we require to achieve it.

In Helruning you will notice that trance states are common, useful and natural phenomena that occur frequently. The trance, however, is but the gateway. Going into trance does not mean anything, the real question is what you make out of it. The answer will come from your subconscious mind. (On the topic of trance I would heartily



recommend *Tranceformations* by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, and *Hypnotic Realities* by Milton Erickson and Ernest Rossi.)

In a trance state, the mind may be free to accept changes in its belief structure, provided these changes are in accord with the subconscious will. The idea that people in trance will accept any sort of suggestion is a myth. In trance, people are usually much more in touch with their true self aspects and will recognize hostile suggestions quite easily. The suggestions which they accept are those that are in tune with their subconscious mind, which knows pretty well what is good for the whole. Conflict may arise when the conscious mind, the ego, tries to control the whole and pretends to know what is good for it. This gives a clue why magical suggestion if often quite abstract or veiled in the shape of symbols, words of power, sacred gestures etc. Symbolic belief, the rune shapes for instance, is easy to understand for the deep ranges of the mind while the ego cannot easily grasp its significance or meddle in the process. Thus, the runes have been called suggestions.

Suggestions are a pretty everyday matter. Everybody gives suggestions all of the time, clear suggestions, diffuse suggestions, indirect suggestions, conscious and unconscious suggestions and even suggestions that contradict themselves. We suggest what we experience and believe with all aspects of our being, be it in speech and silence, posture, motion, gesture, rhythm, sound level, energetic tone, smell, taste, emphasis and so on. All of these are understood as messages by the people (and other life forms) around us, consciously or not, so that even if we try to be silent this silence is a message. We are attuned to communication and cannot help communicating, as everything said and not said is a valid message. Now while every form of communication is suggestion, there seems to be different degrees of validity to our message. We accept easily all the suggestions that support our reality tunnel and our idea of ourselves (after all, they reinforce what we consider reality) but not so with suggestions that contradict our world view. Good suggestions are often those which do not contradict a given belief but improve it. The subconscious mind will produce the reality the ego believes in, and the ego will believe in its reality, thereby telling the deep mind to produce more of it. If you want to change reality, learn to believe that reality can be changed. If you can manage to believe that reality can be changed easily, with elegance and grace, and that such change is pleasant, you are well on your way to becoming a Helrunar. The deep mind will learn that it gets more affection and joy supporting this sort of belief, and will make it come true.

When you practice rune song and posture you may perhaps notice that certain gestures stimulate certain forms of consciousness. Some rune shapes seem to lift the focus of attention, such as ᛁ ᚴ ᛘ ᚹ ᛉ while others seem to lower it ᚨ ᛚ ᛏ ᚢ etc. Often this is accompanied by a sensation of power rushing up or down. Another group seems to centre it in the middle ranges such as ᚺ ᚷ and those that move attention like, ᛡ ᛋ etc. Moving the attention is one of the ways to change consciousness. An example. Moving attention outwards will reduce awareness of inner activities. It is easy to forget oneself when one watches, hears or feels something interesting outside, just as it is easy to forget the outside world when inner activity catches the attention. An interesting inner dialogue will reduce awareness of the outside world, and equally intent listening to the outside world will shut the inner dialogue up. The mind seems to have difficulties in being aware of inside and outside stimuli at the same time, and when we work both representations simultaneously (e.g. inner pictures and outside seeing, inner voice and outside words, inner feeling and outside touch etc) we may encounter some interesting states of confusion and/or magick.

Many magical practices move attention into a state of in-between-ness, when we are neither fully aware of the outside world nor of our inner realities. We embrace a fluid, third state that touches both ranges of sentience but goes beyond them. It should be emphasized that in-between awareness is a state (or non-state) in which consciousness (and reality) can be changed quite easily. Similar changes happen when we move attention in height. Attention at eye level (be it inside or outside awareness)is a very different thing than attention at heart, or groin level. In each of these cases we respond differently to the reality we perceive. What happens to your mood when you stare at the ground for half an hour? What happens when you go bird-watching and stare upwards for a while? Does it make a difference?

I hope that you will not take these words as gospel, it is much more rewarding to experiment. You will find that certain heights of attention are connected with certain moods and feelings. We find a similar model in Castaneda's *The Fire From Within*. In his system, the attention is described as a glowing point of awareness that 'assembles' reality in relation to its position. In Taoism, the same idea is symbolized by a dragon who dances through the oceans of infinity, playing with a fire pearl. This is much more than just a pretty picture. Dragon style Wu Shu contains a lot of movements that actually change the position of this fire pearl, and move attention under will to change the world.

Spider cults use a similar model. The human aura is imagined as a cocoon or net, and the spider (the attention) crawls around in it. The position of the spider determines the nature of the reality believed. Do I have to add that Odin/Wodan rides an eight legged horse? I mention these matters in detail as I think that they are useful fields of research. The rune postures are not as specific as the model of the fire pearl, but on the whole they seem to produce similar effects. If you feel 'uplifted' or 'down to earth' after your practice you will know where your attention went.

By now you should have some experience in the use of rune shapes and sigils to communicate suggestions to the deep. Here are some other ways. Try rune dance for instance. You could spell out a short, positive key word in rune postures and repeat these until it becomes a proper dance. Another way would be to ask the deep mind for a few runes to create a good dance for some purpose. You select them through divination. Then you go through the motions repeatedly until the sequence becomes automatic and the whole thing induces a pleasant trance.

Dance, I think, is one of the fields of magick and self-exploration that has been badly neglected by the western occult tradition. Half of ordinary psychotherapy could be dispensed with if people treated themselves to fifteen minutes of dancing each day. The same goes for traditional ceremonial magick - if you want power, how about dancing until you get it? Rune dance, by the way, need not be specifically a 'rune dance'. Many of the gestures are so simple and natural that they happen anyway. If you dance wildly enough, quite a few of your guestures will resemble rune signs. The theme is also interesting for group sessions. Part of the group could sing/vibrate a given rune sign while the rest interprets it in dance. Perhaps you, personally, feel shy about dancing, or practising dance in private. Well, isn't this a marvellous chance to ask your deep mind for help? If you ask well, it will tell you how to do it. If you ask very well, you find yourself doing it. Seen this way, a difficulty is a lovely chance to learn something new.

Another useful tool is hand-gesture, or 'mudra', as it is called in some Indian systems. You will have seen the pages of pictures that show a variety of hand signs that more or less resemble the rune signs. Most rune signs can be done with one or two hands. On the whole, such hand gestures are not as intense as the practice of the full posture, but then they have advantages of their own. When you have done some practice and know your way with the runes, each of the symbols will carry an association. If you have worked well, each sign will be connected with certain images, inner words and body sensations, i.e. it will make sense in the three major sensory channels.

In NLP language, you would say that the signs are anchored to certain states of consciousness, and that you can find access to these states by the use of the signs. The hand gestures are just that; useful anchors to tap resources of energy and consciousness. They may not be as intense as the full posture and song evocation, but then they can be practised while waiting for a bus. Such anchors are useful for occasions of trouble and crisis, when mind feels upset and wants to change its consciousness. Of course you will have to work with the gestures for a while to ensure that they are effectively connected with their proper consciousness states, but once this connection is made the mind focused on the hand gesture will give a powerful suggestions to the deep realm.

I would like to add that most techniques of ritual magick work with such anchors. The wand is just a stick of wood or metal. Consecration and repeated practice connect it with the subconscious realm of will. Once this connection is made, the magician who wields the wand finds access to Will naturally. Ritual magick uses dozens of such anchors; robes, bells, incense, temple furniture, circle, crown, sword, wand, cup, pentacle, talismans, fetishes, signs of the gods, candles, words of power, gestures and even the pattern of their application are all anchors that touch and activate specific parts of the mind. A good magician can create and dissolve such anchors as s/he wills. A beginner usually depends on them and believes that the power resides in the objects, not in the associations that connect them to the deep mind. This is why beginners collect costly toys while experts can more readily improvise.

Well these are some ways of speaking or runing with the deep mind. They are of use in magick, but they equally work in everyday communication. When you communicate to someone consciously you are also speaking with her or his deep mind, and sometimes the deep mind gets the message while the conscious mind does not notice anything. Nema wrote; 'it does not matter to which mind one speaks the truth, speak it to the mind that listens.' Just as you can stimulate your subconscious mind by paying attention to it, asking it for help and thanking it for the things it does for you, you can also stimulate the deep mind of others.

Try this, pick some person who is not very much tune with the depth. When you notice that s/he has trouble, say 'why don't you ask your subconscious mind?' When you notice that s/he has a good idea, say 'hey! What a wonderful subconscious mind you have! Look at what great things it does for you!' Each time you do this, you give the subconscious mind a measure of affection. Soon enough you will find that it responds to you, and produces the sort of phenomena it gets recognition and affection for.

It does not matter whether your test person has any idea about the nature of the subconscious mind. You will be surprised how it likes to be remembered and accepted. Try this with several people and look out for the little signals, gestures, motions, ideas, spontaneous impulses etc that it may use as an answer. Above all, try it with yourself.

We have dealt with speaking. Listening is just as important. Your deep mind will give you plenty of feedback once you begin to watch for it. It will tell you many things, in images, words or feelings, and these forms of feedback are essential for communication. If you merely speak to it without listening for a response it may well happen that it will ignore you and rightly so. We deal with a living entity, not with a machine, so we should forget about 'ordering', 'commanding' or 'programming'. A good suggestion is a request, not a command, and it works as it strengthens the mutual will of the whole system. What we want is friendship and cooperation with the deep mind. We will not get this if we ignore its needs or try to boss it around. You will always get feedback, but sometimes it may be hard to recognize. If the feedback is subtle you will have to watch very carefully. Sometimes it happens that you cannot understand the message you receive. In this case you can ask the deep mind to make it clearer, and if it wants you to understand it will do so. With practice, you will learn to speak in a language the deep understands, and equally it will learn to answer in terms that are clear to you.

Another way of communication is astral projection. This technique allows you to experience a specific part of the subconscious mind by 'travelling in it'. Your presence poses the question, and your subconscious mind answers by producing scenery, persons, events and insights. This method is useful as it is so direct, it allows you to interact with any given part of the subconscious mind directly. The deep mind creates a dream in which you can move and act. In this way you may encounter material that is 'psycho-active' and deal with it on the spot. A good astral journey is 'real' in that it represents subconscious activity in clear vision, sound and feeling. Your job is not passive as it is in many forms of meditation but active, as the environment is fluid and can be changed just as you can change. Such an event/experience causes transformation from within. Something very similar to astral projection happens when the Helrunar goes for a walk in nature. In the wild and living world we encounter the group mind of all-life, and as we are part of this mutual self, we are dealing with ourselves in a variety of different aspects. When we go out into nature we enter a realm that is completely alive. In such surroundings, the mutual self, or the all-life, can communicate with us quite easily. Perhaps our conscious minds will only perceive the more obvious messages, a bird in flight, a stone of curious colour, a twisted tree living the shape of an earth current, a spider in its web and other omens, but our deep minds will perceive and understand much more. For millennia the shamans of all cultures have learned from the natural world. Maatians believe in the vision that the mutual self, the planetary gestalt, will achieve consciousness through those people who manage to go beyond their humanity and tune into the sentience of all-life. As Nema put it: 'I experience the earth as a single living entity, and feel that those of us with neurosystems are the neurosystem of the planet.' Understanding the nature spirits within also opens the understanding of the nature-sentience around.

Scientists may scoff at the notion of an all-self that they cannot directly perceive, measure or analyze. Perhaps they may agree that the notion of this living all-self is a useful way to treat the earth and its life with more affection, respect and responsibility. In a time of ecological crisis such a belief, no matter whether it is scientific, religious or plain crazy, is of vital importance for the survival of us all. Personally I do not care whether this all-sentience really exists or whether I'm hallucinating it. The more of us believe in it the better for the health of the whole.

This leads to the topic of earthing. A vision, no matter how grand or refining, is useless as long as it does not effect change. It is the manifestation of our magick, be it in word, deed, picture, sound, art, action or whatever, that gives reality to it. If you wish to be a magus, then go ahead and speak your word. The magick is not worth much unless it makes life magical. Ultimately, there should be no difference between magick and everyday life. If we emphasize earthing, and manifest what flows through us, we give the current opportunity to transform the world.

Sometimes it does not even matter how 'good' or right' the earthing is - the act itself may be enough to stimulate a vital change. Through earthing, the vision is suggested to the world. When one has climbed to the top of the world-tree, the only way is down. The shaman climbs this tree frequently. In between climbs, s/he returns to the world of everyday awareness, to bring a tale of magick and healing to the living. Ritual is one of the ways of doing so. To most, ritual means something mysterious, artificial and strange. To magicians, who have learned some basic rituals, it means a series of symbolic acts, gestures and events that is performed in a specific and pre-arranged way. Such people memorize rituals and believe that power comes from performing them like a smooth running machine. In truth ritual is a natural activity.

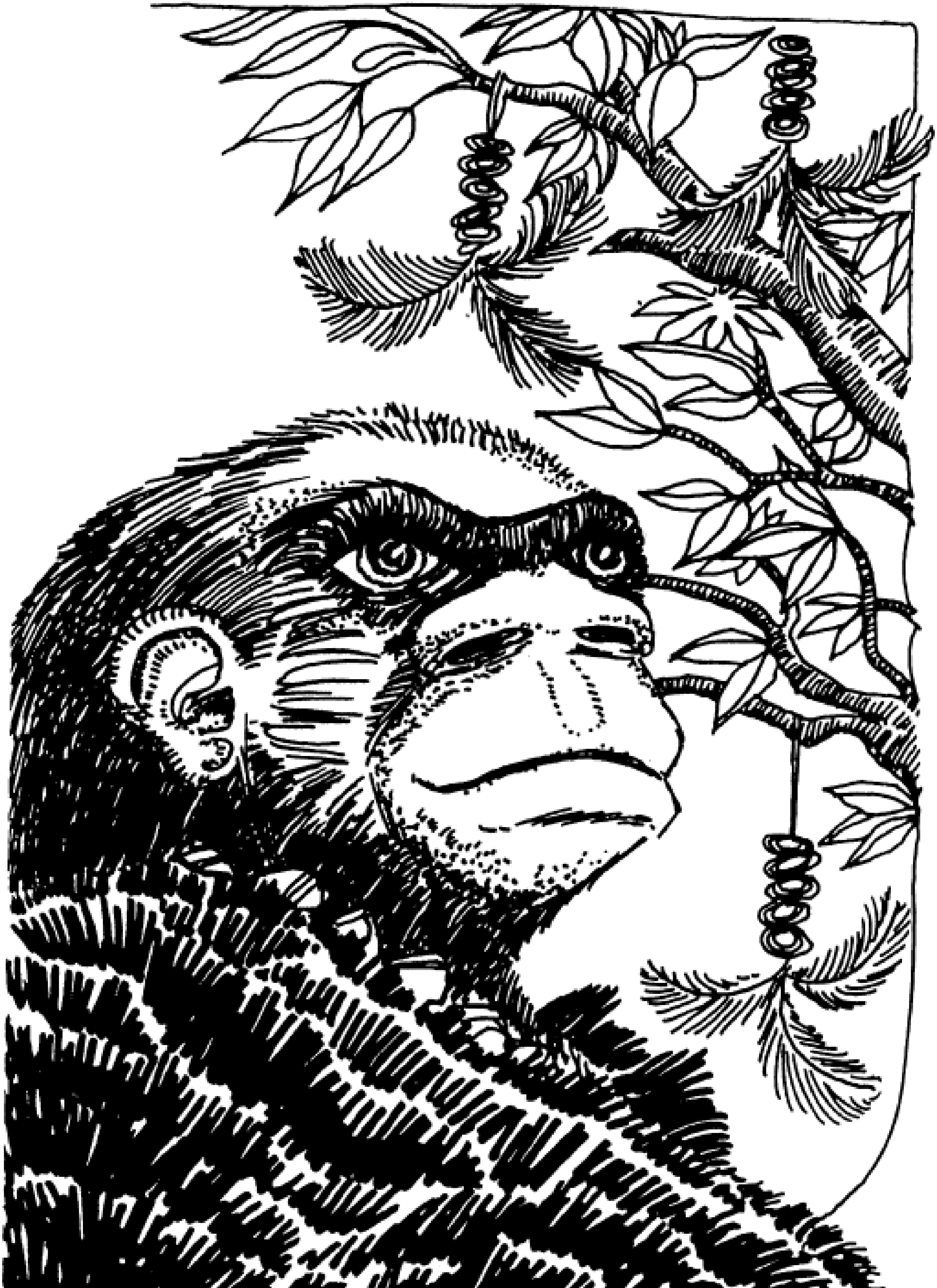
We all practice ritual most of the time (any ethnologist could tell you so), rituals that are so common that we rarely notice our own and only recognize those which differ from ours. All customs are ritual, so are all habits, and ritual is in the way we speak, act, laugh, love, worry, enjoy, dream, eat, drink, sleep and so on. The ritual is not what we are doing, but the way we do it. We define our individuality by using our individual rituals. Rituals are behaviour patterns that keep our realities, and consequently our identities, intact. Change your rituals and you change your world view, which will mean that the world changes, and so will you. Magick offers rituals for exactly this purpose.

By integrating new rituals into your life you are changing it. How did rune posture practice feel when you began? If you have had previous experience with magick it will have been fairly easy, after all, you will be used to doing crazy things for no rational purpose. If you lacked this basic training in 'suspending belief' it was probably much harder. No doubt you needed any amount of reasonable arguments plus plenty of determination to get started at all, and when you did practise, it probably felt strange, if not 'unnatural'. Of course the most absurd practices of rune magick are by no means stranger than the way you set up the breakfast table or make love.

Ritual Magick, in its pure form, makes little sense to the conscious mind, but a great deal of sense to the deep mind. It is no surprise that many beginners dread to do 'unnatural', that is unfamiliar, rituals. How can we deal with this difficulty? For one thing, we can make magical ritual more natural by getting rid of memorized prayer, fixed roles, laws of tradition, and other issues that obstruct self expression. By the same mouth we can work on everyday activity and transform it into magical ritual. 'Doing the dishes' is a powerful ritual once you believe that, with each bit of waste removed, your soul is purified. When I tell myself 'I am going to walk up this mountain, it may be a little exhausting but with each step I gain more power and clarity, and when I arrive at the top I will be surprised with the fresh inspirations I will find.' This suggestion attaches a magical meaning to the reasonable activity 'going for a walk' and the doing makes the operation valid. Such associations work, and work well. Ritual magick is just like that, action that spells meaning to the deep mind. Waving a sharp bit of metal does not do anything. If you believe it to be a magick sword, however, your deep mind may be stimulated to banish unwanted influences. Lets take another example; having a shower makes excellent sense to the ego; it gets rid of physical waste. Defining your bathroom as the 'archetypal well of purification' will not make much sense to your ego but will speak strongly to the deep mind. The ego will shrug at this, but will go ahead and take a shower anyhow. And the ritual will work, on both levels of consciousness. 'Everyday life' is full of opportunities for highly efficient rituals.

In Helruning some of the best rites are so crazy that ego gets no reasons or explanations at all. If you are a flexible person who enjoys change and discovery, you can perform them as a game, or as an 'art happening', but if you are the serious sort of fool who goes in for reasonable occultism and scientific cryptology you will need hundreds of sound reasons to do anything at all, and thousands to persist in it. As a helrunar, you will know how often you are foolish, and will appreciate the freedom that comes from it. Clowns have the complete freedom to do many wonderful and impossible things, rune magick is one of them. It is totally silly to vibrate ancient sound patterns in the woods, to carve suggestions into bone, to make decisions by throwing pieces of wood on the ground or to dance around a fire, snarling and leaping like a beast. On the other hand, everyday reality is quite as silly, but less enjoyable. You are free, to learn, to err and to learn anew. No doubt you will be silly much of the time, but then you will be free to appreciate and enjoy it. If this book has made your magick more flexible it will have achieved its purpose. Though the conscious mind (yours and mine) cannot comprehend all of it, the deep mind does. Like a mirror it will reflect the seer. Where this book ends, the deep mind begins with its instructions. To go beyond the pages, look into yourself. The dance of helrunar begins now.

Love is the Law, Love under Will.



To the future

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